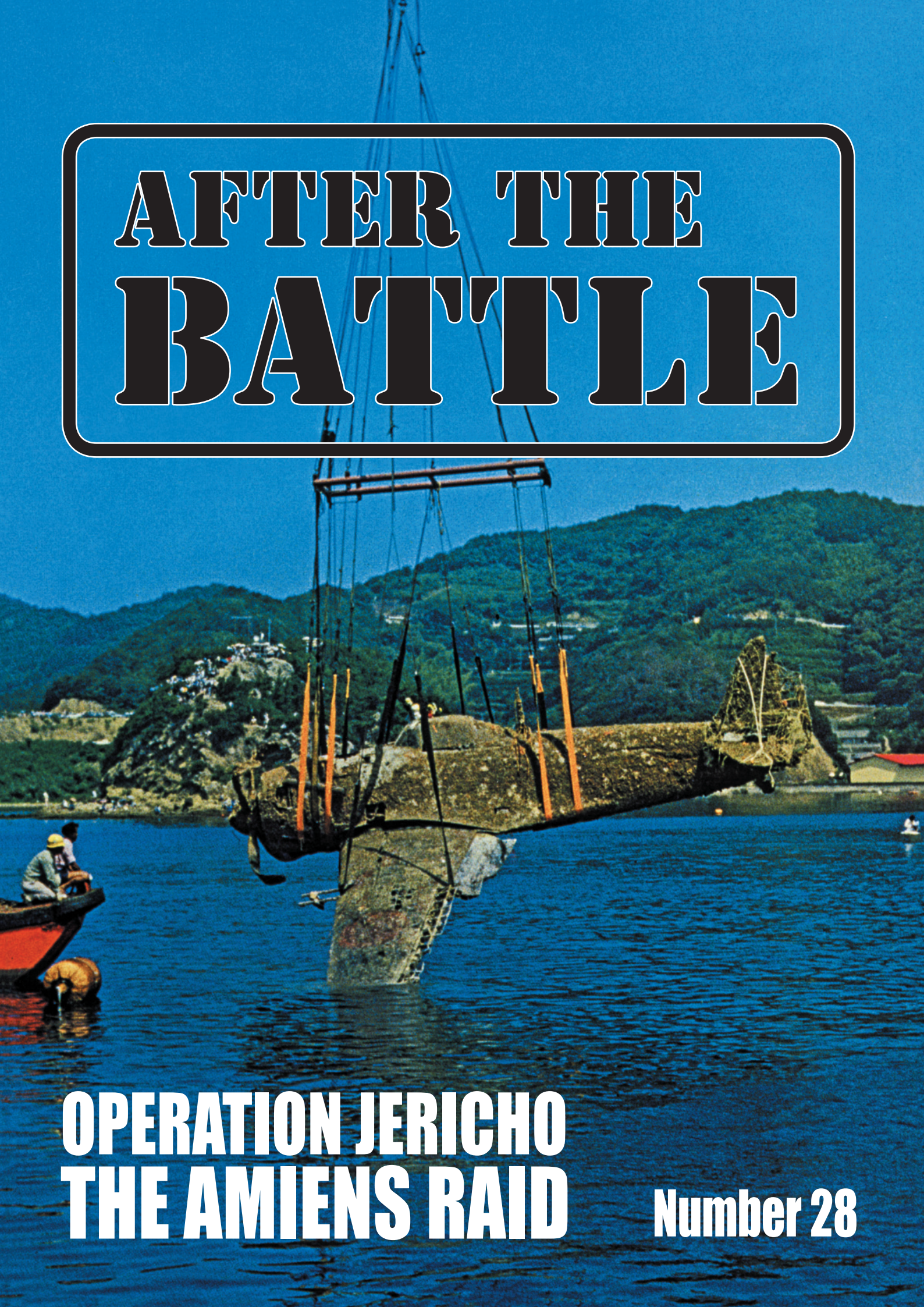
AFTER THE BATTLE



OPERATION JERICHO
THE AMIENS RAID

Number 28

NUMBER 28

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Editor-in-Chief: Winston G. Ramsey

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Published by
Battle of Britain International Ltd.,
The Mews, Hobbs Cross House,
Hobbs Cross, Old Harlow,
Essex CM17 0NN, England

Telephone: 01279 41 8833
Fax: 01279 41 9386
E-mail: hq@afterthebattle.com
Website: www.afterthebattle.com

Printed in Singapore by
Colourscan Overseas Co. Pte. Ltd.

After the Battle is published on the 15th of February, May, August and November.

LONDON STOCKIST for the *After the Battle* range:
Motorbooks, 33 St Martin's Court, St Martin's Lane,
London WC2N 4AN
Telephone: 020 7836 5376. Fax: 020 7497 2539

United States Distribution and Subscriptions:
RZM Imports Inc, 151 Harvard Avenue,
Stamford, CT 06902

Canadian Distribution and Subscriptions:
Vanwell Publishing Ltd., PO Box 2131,
1 Northrup Crescent,
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 7S2.

Australian Subscriptions and Back Issues:
Renniks Publications Pty Limited
Unit 3, 37-39 Green Street, Banksmeadow NSW 2019

New Zealand Distribution:
Dal McGuirk's "MILITARY ARCHIVE", P.O. Box 24486,
Royal Oak, Auckland 1030 New Zealand.

Italian Distribution:
Tuttostoria, PO Box 395, 1-43100 Parma.

Dutch Language Edition:
SI Publicaties/Quo Vadis, Postbus 282, 6800 AG Arnhem.

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Centre Pages: The ignominous end of the *Prinz Eugen* 12,000 miles from Germany off the Pacific island of Enubuj at Kwajalein Atoll (Harold Fowler).

Back Cover: The headstone marking the grave of Wing Commander Charles Pickard killed while leading the attack on Amiens prison on February 18, 1944.

Acknowledgements:
The feature on the Broome air-raid includes extracts from the *Official History of the Royal Australian Air Force 1939-45.*
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ISSN: 0306-154X

Leader of the raid, Wing Commander Charles 'Pick' Pickard, with his observer Flight Lieutenant John Broadley in front of 'F' for Freddie at Hunsdon in January 1944. Both died in the mission the following month.

OPERATION JERICHO
THE AMIENS RAID

BY JOHN REED

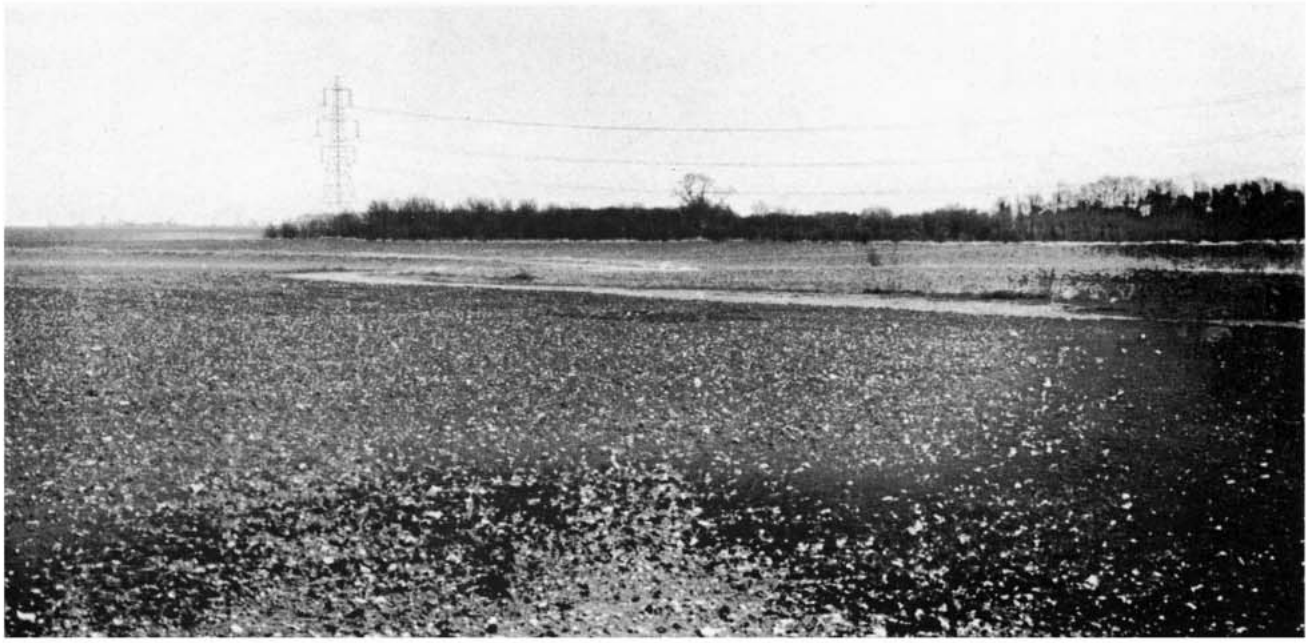
On February 18, 1944, nineteen Mosquito Mk VI intruders of No. 140 Wing took off from their base at Royal Air Force Hunsdon, and climbed through the eddies of a swirling snowstorm at the start of a mission that was in many ways to be the ultimate test of their airmanship. Their objective was the German-administered gaol in the French town of Amiens and their task was to deliver their carefully calculated bomb-loads from an extremely low altitude with sufficient accuracy to breach the outer wall and allow the inmates to escape.

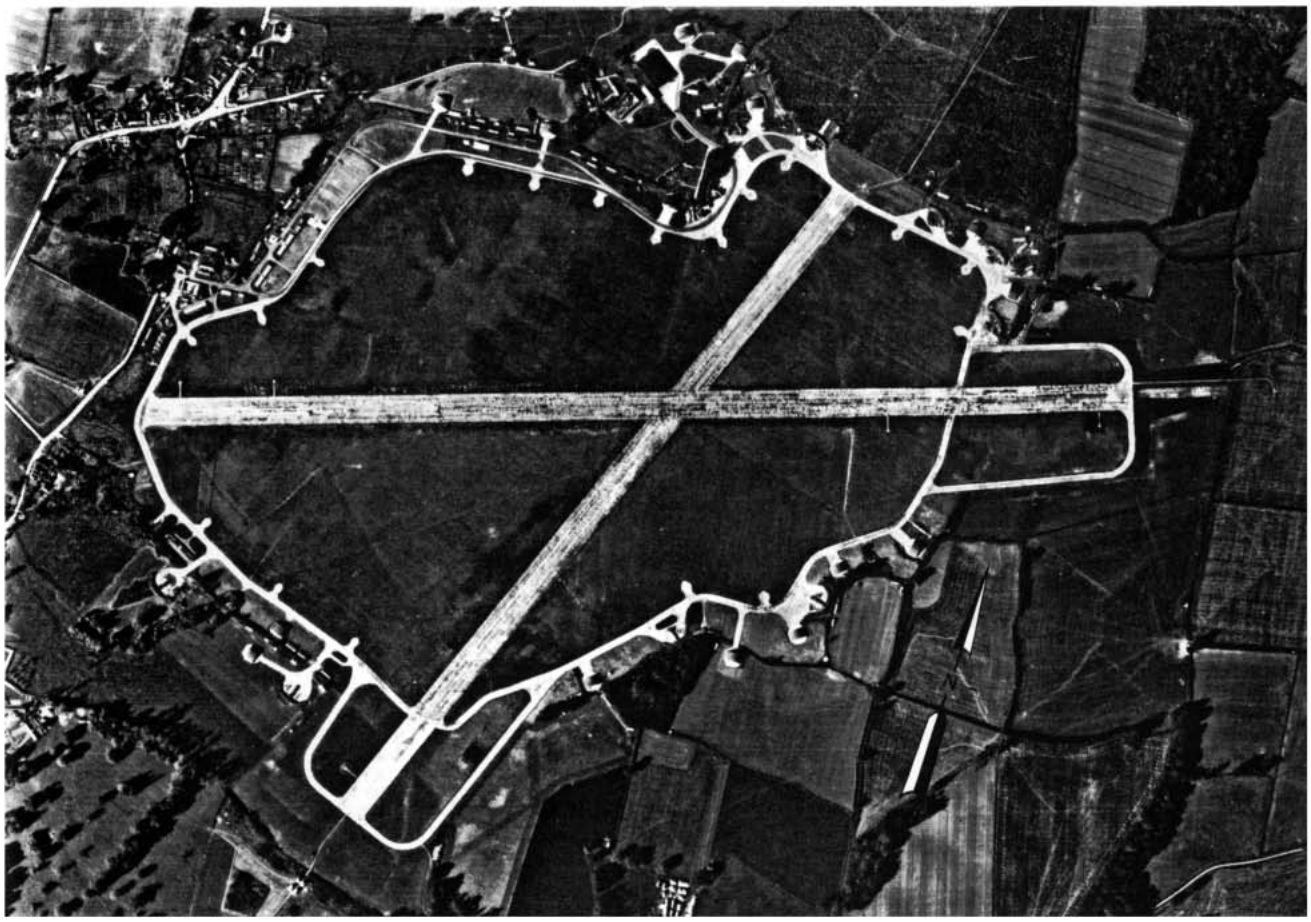
The dispersal for No. 464 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force on the southern side of Hunsdon aerodrome in Hertfordshire on the morning of February 18, 1944 (IWM).

The Fliers

The story of the aptly-named 'Operation Jericho' and the men who made it possible began eighteen months previously with the implementation of Article 15 of the Empire Air Training Plan under which so many wartime aircrew received their flying training in Commonwealth countries. Article 15 provided that ' . . . the pupils of Canada, Australia and New Zealand shall after training be identified with their respective Dominions by organizing Dominion units . . . ' So it was that No. 487 (Royal New Zealand Air Force) and No. 464 (Royal

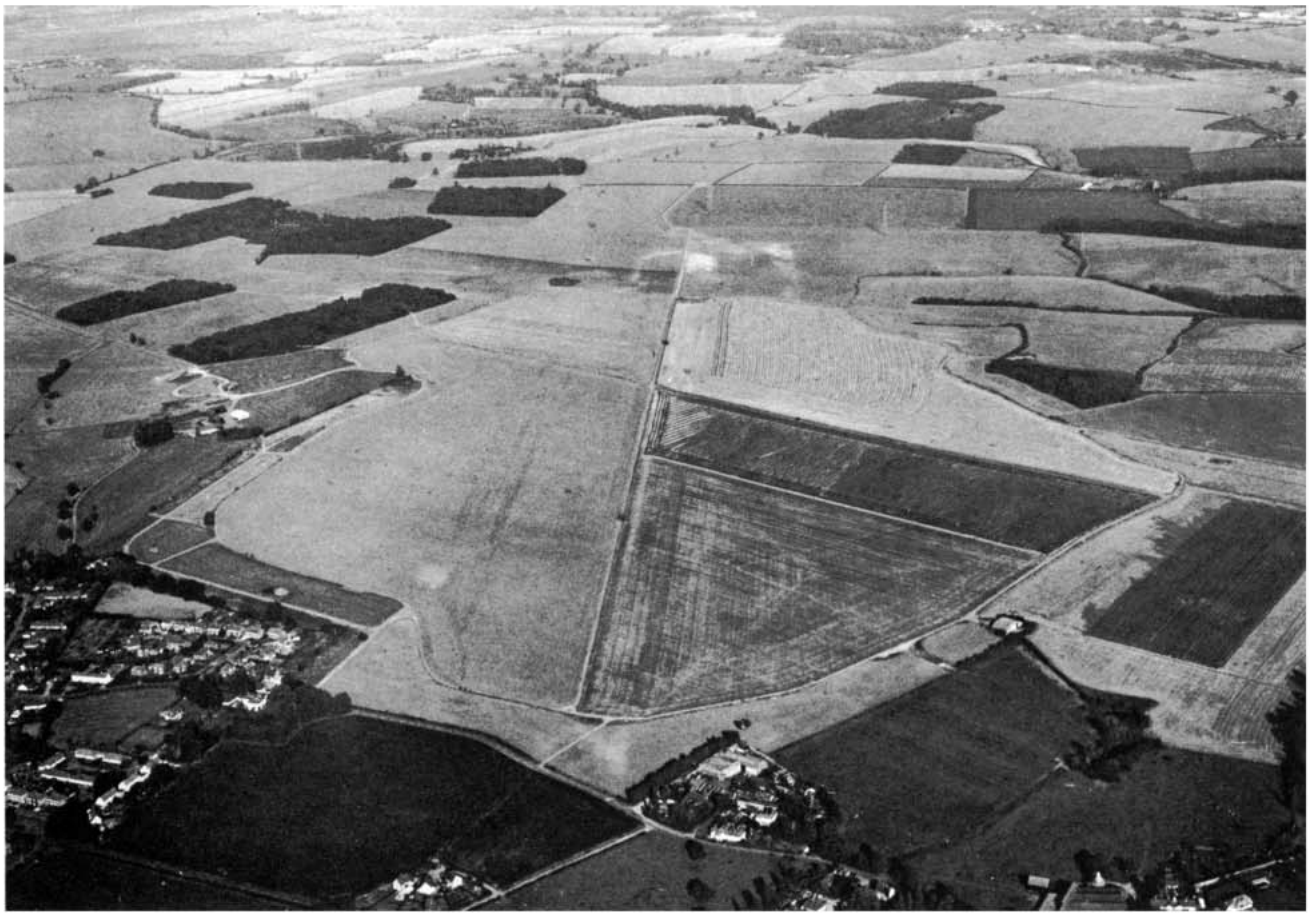
Thirty-five years later the airfield, not far from the post-war 'new town' of Harlow, has been returned to agriculture with little remaining of its warlike past.





Above: **Deserted Hunsdon on October 10, 1946. The airfield was unusual in that it only had two runways (Crown Copyright).**

Below: **August 18, 1978 looking east. The perimeter track still remains together with a ten-foot strip from each runway.**



Air Vice-Marshal Sir Basil Embry *(left)*, the 2nd Tactical Air Force No. 2 Group Commander, regularly took part in operations and had planned to lead 'Operation Jericho' himself. He felt Wing Commander Pickard *(right)* did not have sufficient experience in low-level strikes but he was over-ruled at the last minute by his chief, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham, C-in-C 2nd TAF (IWM).

Australian Air Force) Squadrons were formed as part of the Empire component of RAF Bomber Command and took their place alongside No. 21 Squadron in No. 2 (Light Bomber) Group based at Feltwell in Norfolk.

By the summer of 1943, the predominantly Dominion-oriented No. 140 Wing was flying Lockheed Venturas from RAF Sculthorpe where it had been posted as part of the newly-formed 2nd Tactical Air Force. Their aircraft were no match for the latest German interceptors and were all too frequently outclassed. On their twenty-fourth mission — a diversionary raid on a power station at IJmuiden — No. 487 Squadron were jumped by a strong formation of Focke Wulf 190s and, in the subsequent fight, all but one of their number were downed leaving only one of their flight commanders Squadron Leader Trent to press home a hopeless attack. Trent's heroism was recognised by the award of the Victoria Cross but, for the survivors of this costly episode in the Wing's history, the autumn of 1943 meant passing through the newly-formed Conversion Flight and a chance to fly the latest de Haviland Mosquito Mk VI.

Re-equipment with the sleek plywood-built Mosquito with its 1,000lb bomb load and four 20mm cannon with a maximum speed of around 300 mph, meant that the 'Sculthorpe Wing' could undertake a new style of longer-range offensive mission. Low-level attacks became the order of the day but with them came a whole host of new problems that had been undreamed of when they had been flying their lumbering Venturas. Too often, pilots found their vision obscured by a fly-splattered windscreen and it was not long before they learned that, when streaking cross-country at tree-top level, a bird strike on a leading edge or main spar could be every bit as lethal as flak shell.

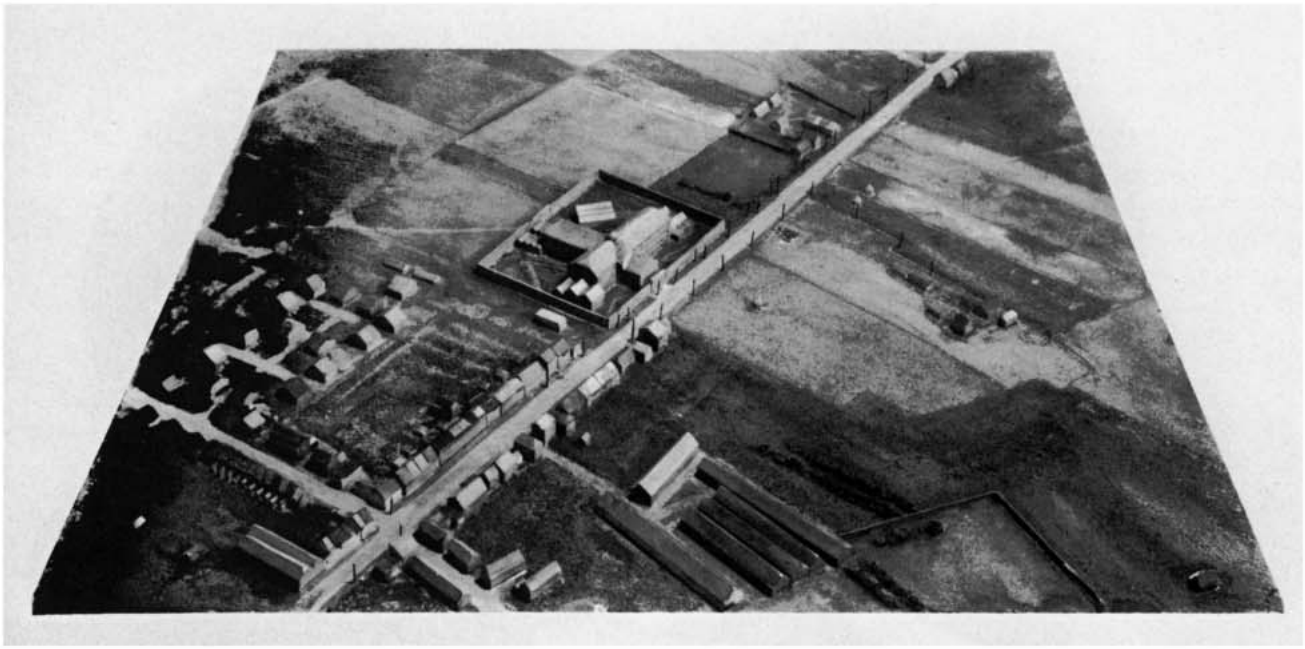
Inevitably there were casualties. After one grim October day during which three Mk VIs crashed whilst on low-level sorties, the two Dominion squadrons were withdrawn for intensive re-training but, after only thirteen days, No. 487 Squadron were operational again, fully confident that they had mastered the intricacies of low-level flight. Within a week they had been joined by No. 21 Squadron fresh from conversion training. On November 10, 1943, the entire Wing was at last fully operational with Mosquitos.

Even before all three squadrons became operational, No. 140 Wing had acquired a reputation for being 'a bit special'. However, it was not just good airmanship that distinguished the Sculthorpe wing. There was an almost unique combination of dash and professional skill in their approach to the job and there was no doubting that this was something that began at the top.

'The top' for No. 140 Wing was Air Vice-Marshal Basil Embry, four times awarded the DSO for bravery in action and now commanding the 2nd TAF's No. 2 Group. As an Air Vice-Marshal, Embry took part in no fewer than nineteen operations and it was in every way typical of his leadership that, when No. 487 Squadron made their first Mosquito strike against an enemy target, he should have accompanied them with his SASO as his navigator.

Flying as Wing Leader on that mission was Wing Commander P. E. Pickard, DSO, DFC, another firm believer in leadership by example. As Station Commander at Sculthorpe, Pickard was no chairborne 'Station Master' and he intended to fly as Wing Leader whenever circumstances permitted. He proved his point by converting to Mosquitos after a mere ten hours tuition at de Haviland's Hatfield works with a flair that seemed typical of one of those charismatic individuals whose careers are punctuated by a series of remarkable exploits. A 'starring' role in the documentary film *Target for Tonight* had earned him a place in the public eye but, in reality, his skill as leader of the Whitleys that had carried the men of the Parachute Regiment to Bruneval, and subsequently in command of No. 161 Squadron flying Lysanders and Hudsons on clandestine missions to occupied Europe, was far more impressive than any film.

Under Pickard's leadership the Wing rapidly gained in experience and, after having been switched to strikes against suspected V-weapon sites in the Pas de Calais, moved their base to Hunsdon in Hertfordshire in order to be nearer to their regular targets. February 1944 found No. 487 Squadron — now with a new CO, night fighter 'ace' Wing Commander I. S. Smith — taking on a stint as night intruders whilst the rest of the Wing flew no fewer than twenty-two strikes in a fifteen day period in the 'round-the-clock' offensive.



The Resistance

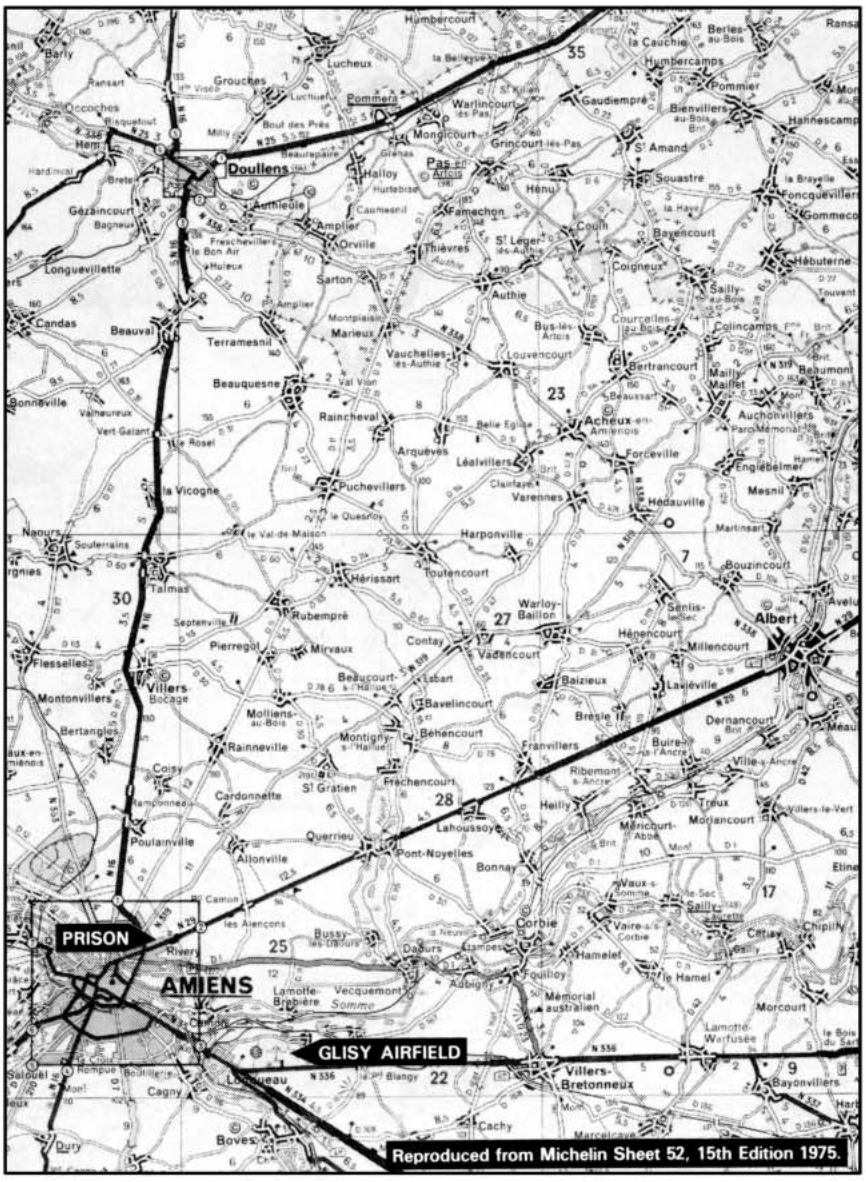
The model constructed of the prison and environs used to brief the crews now preserved at the Imperial War Museum, London. In 1944 the building was virtually isolated on the northern side of the N29 road to Albert (IWM).

Whilst 2nd TAF strove to achieve air superiority, a very different type of war was being waged in the towns of northern France. On the invasion coast, the many and varied groups that made up the French Resistance movement were fighting a desperate battle, not only to disrupt the German war effort but also to protect themselves against treachery and betrayal. There was, in fact, no 'Movement' as such, for it was not until March 1944 that the exiled General Charles de Gaulle ordered the formation of the FFI (Forces Francais de l'Interieur) in an effort to unify clandestine activities and to endow them with a degree of consistency. Until that time, the Resistance was — despite all the efforts of the London-based Special Operations Executive — to remain an assortment of strange bedfellows that mirrored all of the traditional complexities of the French political scene.

Nowhere were these differences more apparent than in the gulf that divided the right-wing OCM (Organisation Civile et Militaire) from the FTP (Franc-Tireurs et Partisans). However, it was typical of the times that the ex-officer-dominated 'Giraudist' OCM should have been drawn into a series of uneasy alliances with the exclusively-Communist FTP whose members owed allegiance to no government other than that of the Soviet Union. It was a not unfamiliar situation in France and, although few SOE agents had been able to successfully co-ordinate the activities of the two, in at least one area they had been able to make special use of the FTP's undoubted professionalism.

Such SOE activities as were possible in the top security areas of northern France were necessarily conducted on a very tight rein but the organisation's locally-recruited agents — the so-called 'SOSIES' — had established an effective escape network in the Charleville area, close to the Belgian frontier. It was hazardous work and, occasionally, so specialised that they were obliged to call on the local FTP 'cell' to act as muscle-men.

Enlisting the aid of the Communist guerilla groups was not without its problems. Mavericks of the resistance, their attacks were often impetuous in situations where discretion should have been the rule as, for example, their derailing of a troop train near Miremont in the winter of 1943 in which ninety SS officers, including one general, lost their lives. It



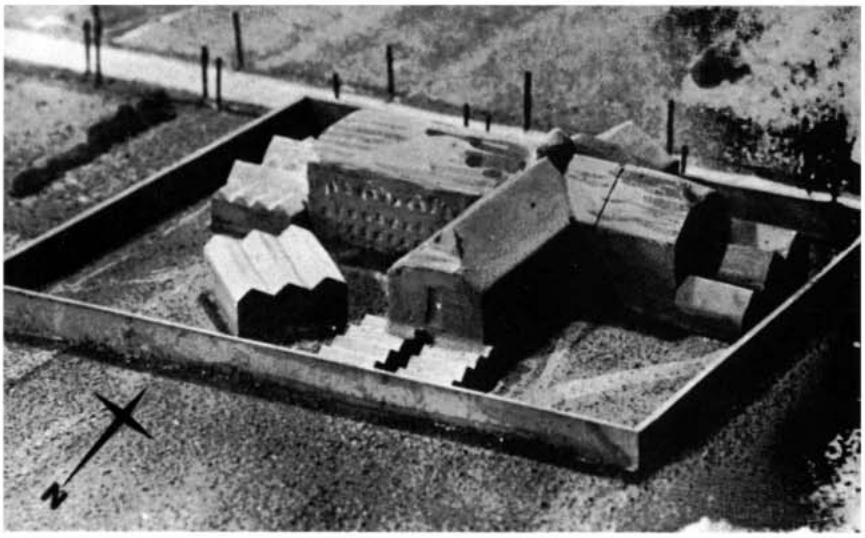
was an action that provoked a savage security swoop and led to the execution of twelve FTP members before, eventually, their local deputy leader Jean Beaurin was seized and taken to Amiens gaol. Inevitably the German dragnet pulled in 'SOSIES' too, amongst them the son-in-law of their local leader Dominique Ponchardier. There was no doubt that those arrested would be sentenced to death and, accordingly, the FTP leader 'Pepe', a veteran guerilla fighter and noted hard-line Communist, approached Ponchardier with a view to a joint operation to free their comrades.

Elsewhere in the Department of the Somme, the OCM had suffered badly too. During two bitter days in November 1943, the German security forces had closed in on their Abbeville group and had arrested most of its members including the influential local chief Dr. Mans. These arrests followed betrayal by a fellow Frenchman who came to the area claiming to be an OCM courier from Paris. The traitor's credentials seemed sound and, therefore, when he wished to discuss complex plans for the future, he was successively referred to higher levels of command until, eventually, he was in a position to expose the entire network to his masters.

Dr. Mans and his colleagues were taken to join Jean Beaurin and the FTP prisoners awaiting execution in Amiens gaol, a grim place behind a twenty-foot-high wall guarded by a specially-trained detachment of German troops. There were 180 Resistance workers amongst the 700 inmates, plus another 200 'political prisoners' arrested by the authorities in Vichy France, amongst whom were many dedicated Communists whose welfare was a matter of concern to 'Pepe' and his group.

Typically, the FTP had decided to 'go it alone' with a raid to free some of their members from another gaol at St. Quentin but they failed dismally and lost more of their men in the attempt. Thereafter, lacking any form of direct contact with London, the left-wing guerillas decided that their best hope of obtaining the release of Beaurin and the many other Communists held at Amiens lay with the 'SOSIES' and were content to leave it to them to make the necessary arrangements.

The collapse of the Abbeville group had been only one of a number of body-blows to befall the Resistance during the winter of 1943-44. With the D-Day landings only six months away, it was essential that the secret armies were fully prepared for an intensive campaign yet, throughout Brittany and northern France, SOE circuits had collapsed, arms caches had been uncovered, and the morale of resistance workers had sunk to a low ebb. Thus, when Ponchardier's request for some form of assistance to free the Amiens captives reached London through the 'Alibi' signals and liaison network, there was an almost instant recognition of the likely morale-boosting effects of such an operation.

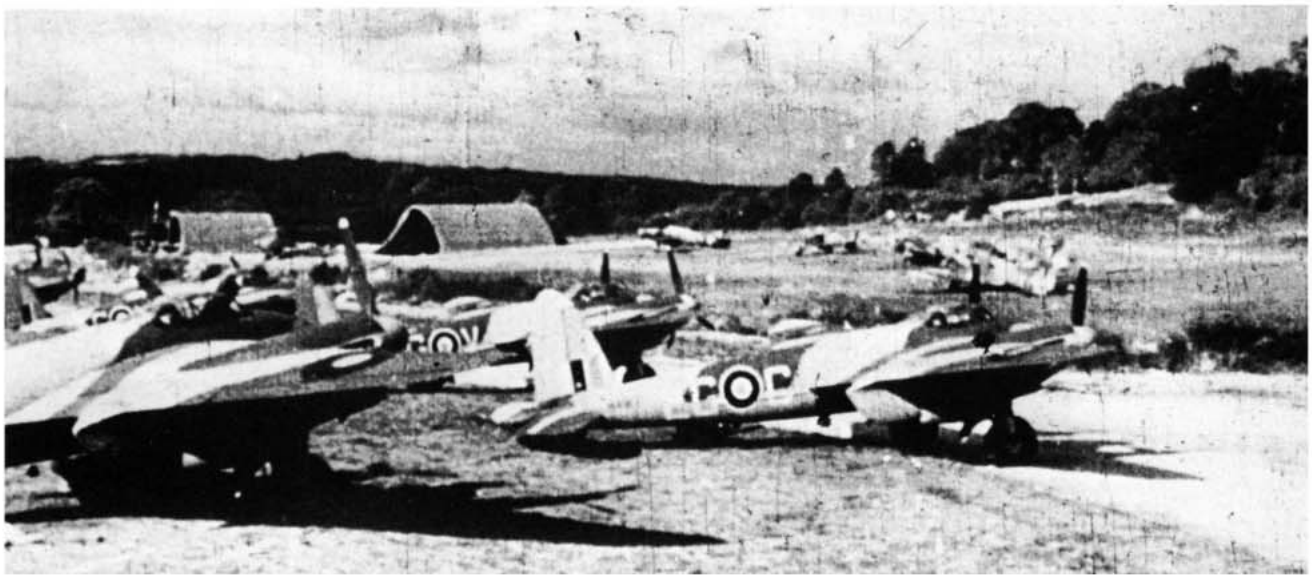


'. . . and they have told us that they would rather be blown up by British bombs than shot by the Nazis.' Pickard's words at the briefing when the model was shown to the crews. This picture was not released for publication until October 29, 1944 (IWM).

Throughout January, a succession of messages passed along the secret lines of communication as the London planners sought as much information as could possibly be obtained on the construction and layout of the cell block. Any air attack would have to consist of two seperate strikes: one to breach the outer wall and the other to literally blow down the internal doors without injuring the occupants. There was a delay when it was realised that two of 'Pepe's' lieutenants, lost in the abortive St. Quentin raid, had been carrying the only detailed plan but, after a flurry of signals, the bombing experts finally accumulated sufficient information to enable them to arrive at the right combination of bomb, charge and delay which it was hoped would achieve the desired result.

Gradually the plan took shape. Sources in Amiens recommended that the attack be carried out at mid-day when the escapees could mingle with the lunch-time crowds — it was never mentioned that there might be no such crowds in the aftermath of an air-raid and gaol break — and Ponchardier obtained assurances that both men and lorries would be available to help them to safety. By now though time was running out for the imprisoned Resistance workers. Twelve executions had been planned for February 19, Beaurin's for the following day and that of Ponchardier's son-in-law for the 25th. There were other prisoners too whose presence lent an added urgency to the proposals for the raid. M. Cruel, the Chief of the Bureau of the Prefecture, had been detained since mid-November and, on February 14, 1944, he was joined by the Gestapo's latest victim M. Vivant, the Sous-Prefet of Abbeville, a prominent Gaullist and a king pin of the local Resistance. Without Vivant, Resistance in the Department of the Somme seemed doomed to early failure, but, by that time, his fate along with that of the other prisoners rested in the hands of Pickard and his Hunsdon-based Mosquito Wing.

A very real threat to a successful attack came from the Luftwaffe at nearby Glisy aerodrome and Typhoons from No. 198 Squadron were to attack the airfield to keep the German aircraft grounded.



The Raid

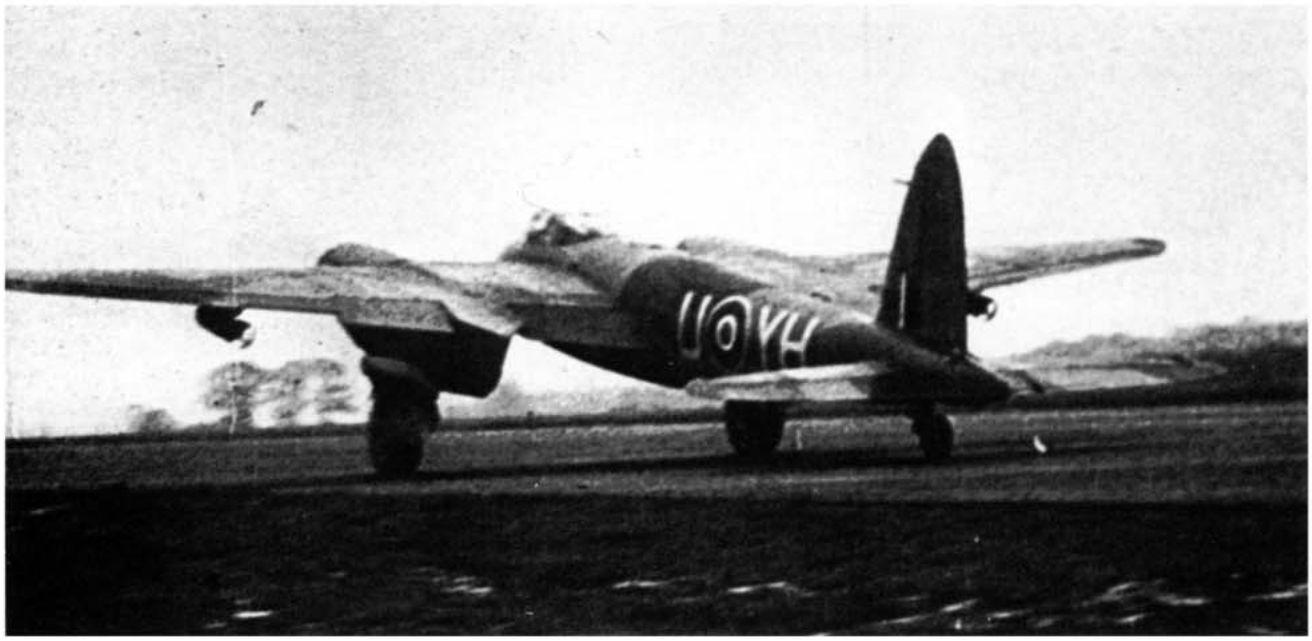
Technically, there was no reason why the Amiens raid should not have been given to any of the 2nd TAF's Mosquito Squadrons but No. 140 Wing seemed almost uniquely qualified for the job. Their characteristic elan, their familiarity with northern France and their bombing accuracy spoke for themselves but there was possibly another reason for their selection. At least one authority claims that Pickard had met Ponchardier and certainly, if the mission was intended as a morale-booster for the Resistance, then Pickard was the obvious choice for leader as his exploits with No. 161 Squadron had earned him a special respect amongst the guerilla fighters.

The plan for 'Operation Jericho' was a delicate one calling for some precise flying. Eighteen aircraft were to participate, six from each squadron in the wing, and they were to attack in three seperate waves.

The first group — provided by No. 487 (RNZAF) Squadron — was given the task of bombing the metre-thick outer wall, approaching on a bearing of 150 degrees at a height of only fifty feet. Other crews from No. 487 Squadron were to breach the northern wall of the gaol using a mixture of 500lb HE

Pilot Officer 'Merv' Darrell of No. 487 Squadron in EG-C with his navigator Steve Stevenson taxi out from their dispersal. No still pictures were taken of the raid so all our contemporary photographs are stills from the cine shot for the propaganda film it was intended to make of the operation (IWM). *Below:* **Although the skyline is little changed, the blister hangars have long gone.**

Below: **The tail about to lift on the Mossie flown by Wing Commander 'Danny' Dale, CO of No. 21, the back up squadron (IWM).**



(Medium Capacity), HE (General Purpose) and HE (Semi-armour Piercing) bombs fitted with eleven second delay fuses. Simultaneously, No. 464 (RAAF) Squadron would press home an attack on the main building and guards quarters from a height of 100 feet on a bearing of 250 degrees, i.e. virtually at right angles to the No. 487 Squadron aircraft. Blast and concussion would, it was hoped, spring the cell doors and, in the resultant confusion, the prisoners could make their getaway through the shattered outer walls. Pickard planned to hold his third wave from No. 21 Squadron in reserve, to be called in should either of the strikes by the Dominion fliers fail to achieve their objectives.

An elaborate plaster of Paris model of the prison and its ancilliary buildings was constructed in order to familiarise the crews with their target and, after an anxious day's waiting for a break in the grim winter weather, the go-ahead was given for the raid to take place on February 18 — the day before the first of the planned executions.

The nineteen aircraft that taxied out onto Hunsdon's runway at the start of the mission included one 'outsider', DZ414 (IU-B) of the RAF Film Production Unit, flown by Flight Lieutenant Tony Wickham, whose task was to bring back sufficient footage of the raid to enable the propaganda warfare experts to produce a morale-boosting film. Otherwise, the order of battle was as planned with each squadron's CO leading his respective wave, with Pickard flying as Wing Leader in one of No. 487 Squadron's aircraft but accompanying No. 464 Squadron. The full order was:

No. 487 (RNZAF) SQUADRON

Wing Commander I. S. Smith	EG-R CO
Pilot Officer M. N. Sparks	EG-T
Pilot Officer M. L. S. Darrell	EG-C
Flight Sergeant S. Jennings	EG-H
Flight Lieutenant B. D. Hanafin	EG-Q
Pilot Officer D. R. Fowler	EG-J

No. 464 (RAAF) SQUADRON

Wing Commander W. Iredale	SB-F CO
Flying Officer K. L. Monaghan	SB-U
Flight Lieutenant T. McPhee	SB-V
Sqdn Ldr W. R. C. Sugden	SB-A
Sqdn Ldr A. I. McRitchie	SB-T
Group Captain P. E. Pickard	EG-F

John Broadley helps Charles Pickard on with his Mae West. 'Pick' is wearing a paratrooper's Denison smock plus his habitual pipe (IWM).

No. 21 SQUADRON

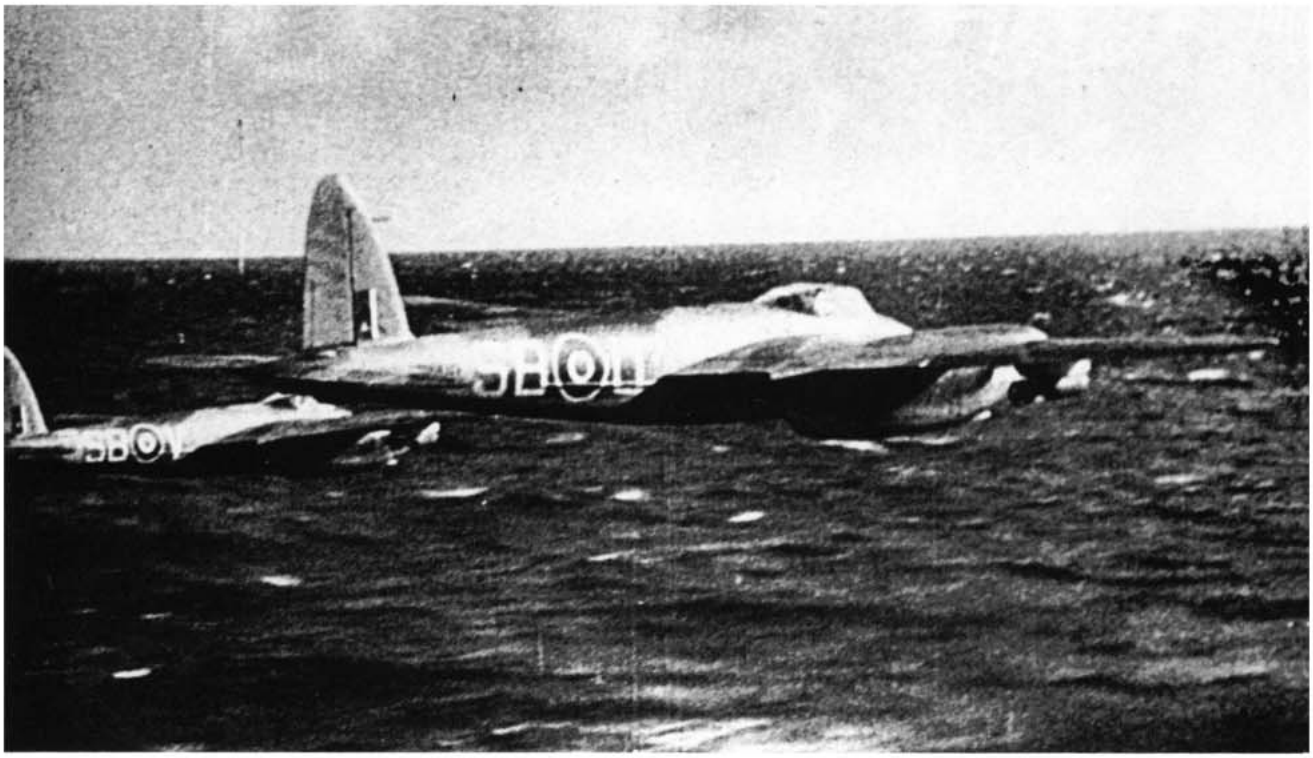
Wing Commander I. D. Dale	YH-U CO
Flight Lieutenant E. E. Hogan	YH-P
Flight Sergeant Steadman	YH-F
Flight Sergeant D. A. Taylor	YH-D
Flight Lieutenant M. J. Benn	YH-J
Flight Lieutenant A. E. Wheeler	YH-C

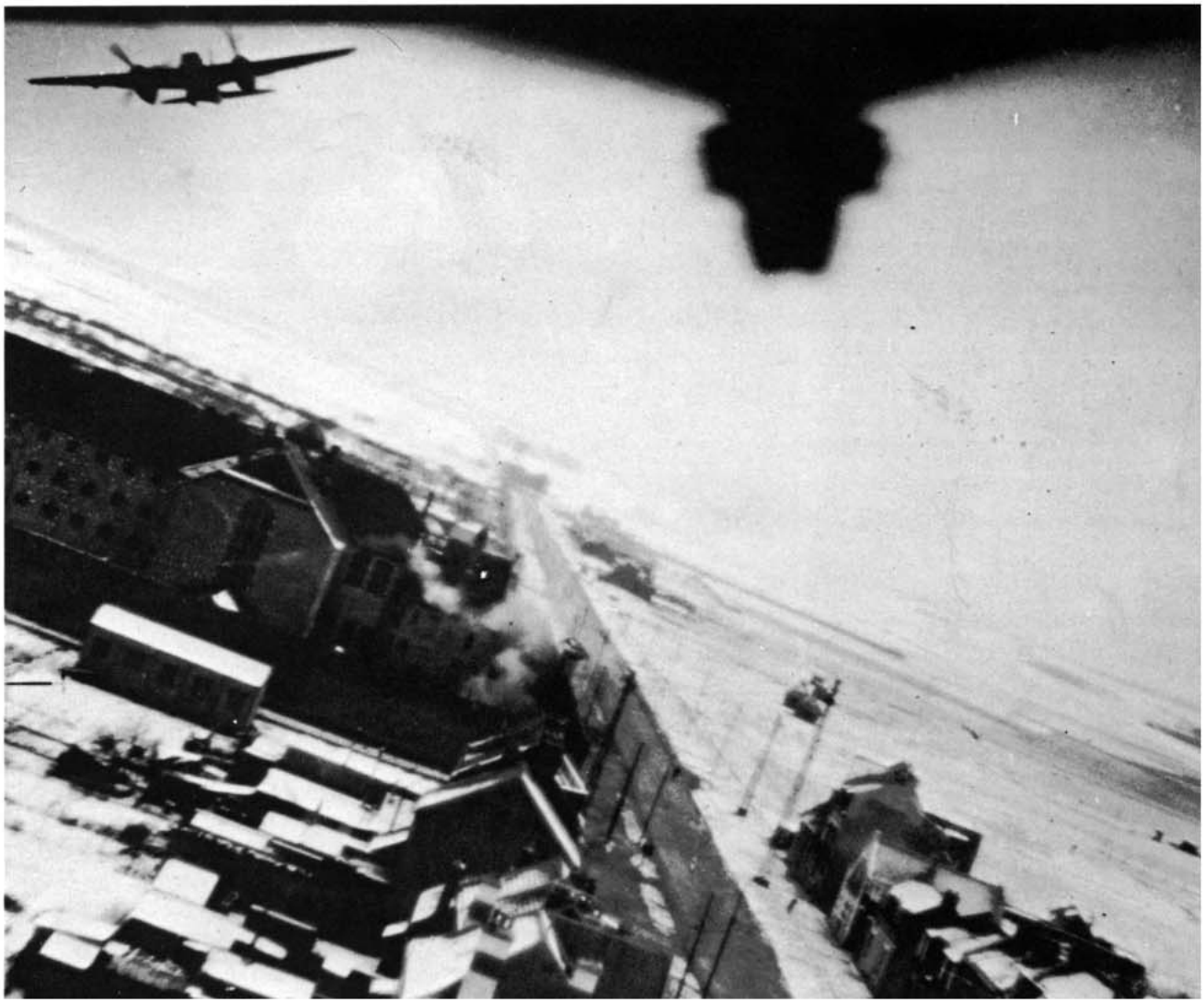
FILM PRODUCTION UNIT

Flight Lieutenant T. Wickham

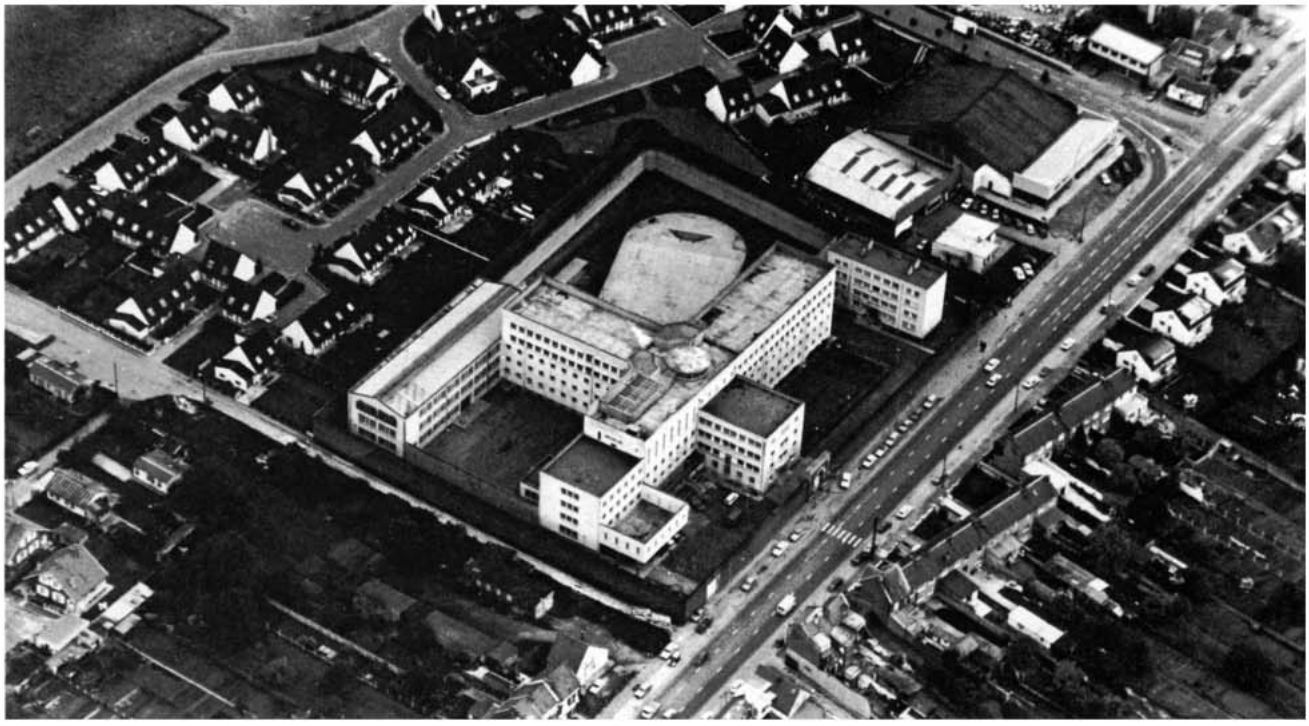
Airborne shortly after 11.00 a.m., the Wing made its way south across the snow-blanketed Home Counties to a point off the Sussex coast near Littlehampton where they were to rendezvous with their escort of twelve Typhoons from No. 198 Squadron. By this time the weather was still sufficiently poor to cast doubts over the entire operation but, spurred on by the knowledge that further delay might cost the lives of the prisoners, the

Lee Howard joined the RAF Film Production Unit in 1942. He was detailed as cine photographer to film the raid in a Mosquito flown by Tony Wickham and he brought back some dramatic footage. After the war, Lee Howard became editor of the Sunday Pictorial and later the Daily Mirror. He died on November 5, 1978 during the research for this story. His then-wife believed he may have carried a still camera as well but unfortunately all his personal notes were loaned to another newspaper some time ago and are now lost. Here he films two No. 464 Squadron aircraft flown by Flight Lieutenant McPhee and Flying Officer Monaghan.

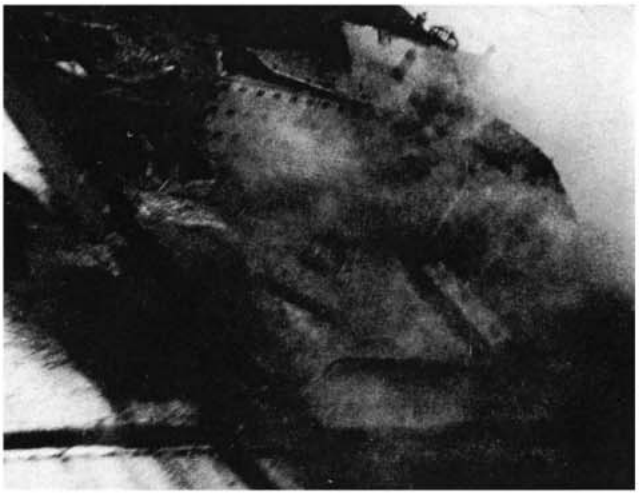




Above: Possibly taken on the first of the three runs over the target by Lee Howard looking north-east up the road to Albert — the opposite way to that of the main approach to the prison. The aircraft behind is believed to be Pickard's. *Below:* Thirty-four years later, the restrictions of another era force us to circuit the prison at an unexciting 1,500 feet.

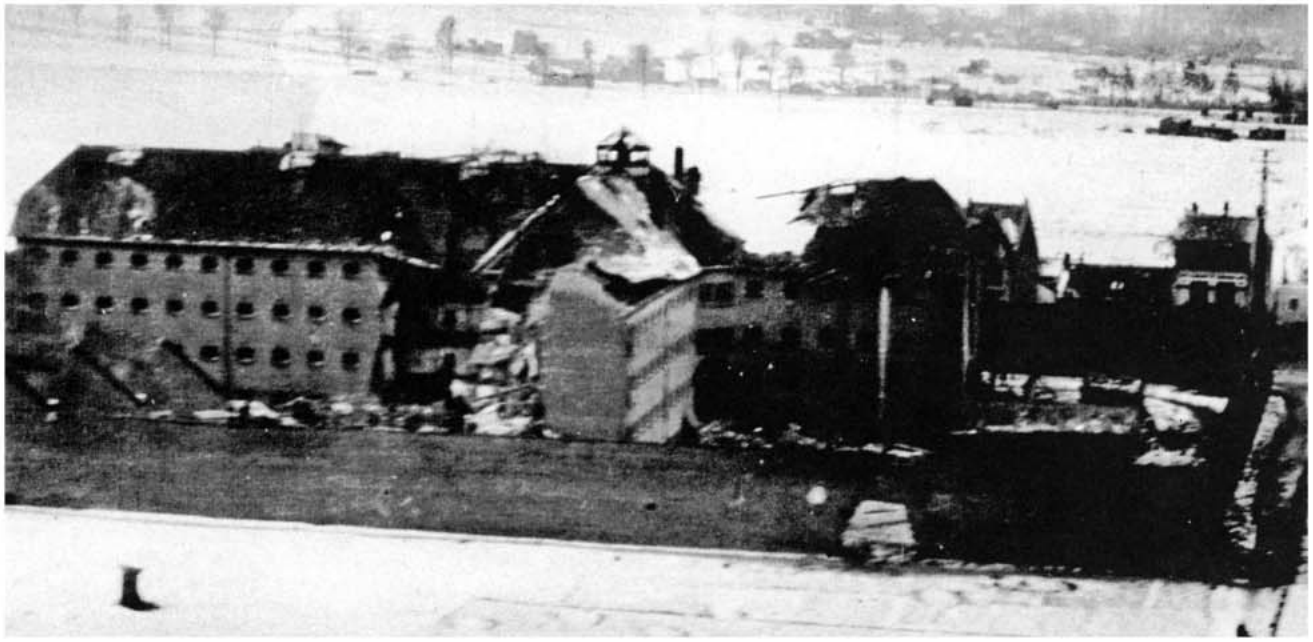


This sequence of stills shows the direction of attack on the northern wall. The New Zealanders swept down the Albert road (from the left in these photos), then turned to starboard in a wide ninety-degree turn to line up on the rear wall. 'Merv' Darrall's breach can be seen on the left and Bob Fowler's on the right, the snow-covered ground blackened with blasted masonry (IWM).



NEW RING ROAD
TO AMIENS CENTRE
N29

VIEW OF THE PRISON TODAY LOOKING NORTH-WEST



RAF Reconnaissance photos, unfortunately undated, showing the extent of the damage. Bob Fowler's breach clearly visible. His navigator was Frank Wilkins (IWM).

aircrews battled their way through the increasingly-severe snowstorms. Everything depended on the small force clinging together and combining to deliver their attack but, before they reached the Channel, there were stragglers. Both Nos. 464 and 21 Squadrons lost two of their number in the blizzard and four of the Typhoons also failed to make contact with the Mosquitos. All subsequently returned to their bases leaving Pickard to lead the fourteen remaining intruders and their escort across the Channel at sea-level to make a landfall just north-east of Dieppe. The formation then climbed to 5,000 feet and flew a curving course to approach Amiens from a northerly direction.

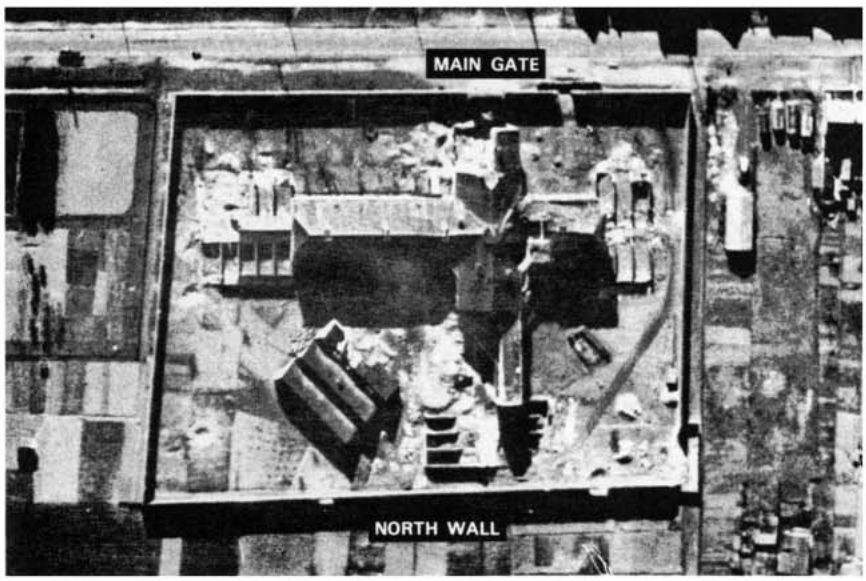
Although northern France lay beneath a blanket of snow, the weather improved markedly as the Mosquitos neared their objective and the leaders had no difficulty in picking out the poplar-lined avenue that pointed like a finger post towards the gaol. Quickly they dropped to tree-top height and, without further ado, aligned themselves for their bombing runs. At three minutes past twelve, Wing Commander Smith, leading EG-T and EG-H, swept along Albert Road for the initial attack on the western wall. According to Pilot Officer 'Merv' Darrell in EG-C and Pilot Officer Bob Fowler in EG-J, the first three planes missed the wall. After a small ninety degree sweep to the north to allow for the eleven second delay fuses in the leading aircraft, 'Merv' Darrell and Bob Fowler deliberately released their bombs short as they were aware of people close to the wall. Both aircraft blew neat holes in the northern wall. (The sixth No. 487 Squadron aircraft EG-Q, piloted by Flight Lieutenant 'Tich' Hanafin, had been hit by flak shortly before the attack and had been obliged to break off and return to base.)

Two aircraft from No. 464 Squadron led by Wing Commander Bob Iredale then came in to bomb the guards' dining room where it was known that the majority would be assembled shortly after mid-day. They were successful and then the last two aircraft from the same squadron came in to bomb the main building.

To Pickard, flying with No. 464 Squadron, it was apparent that both inner and outer walls had been breached. Unfortunately however it was equally obvious that wides and overs had caused considerable damage to the building but, as No. 464 flew on to reform over the town of Albert, the first figures were to be seen clambering from the wreckage of the gaol.

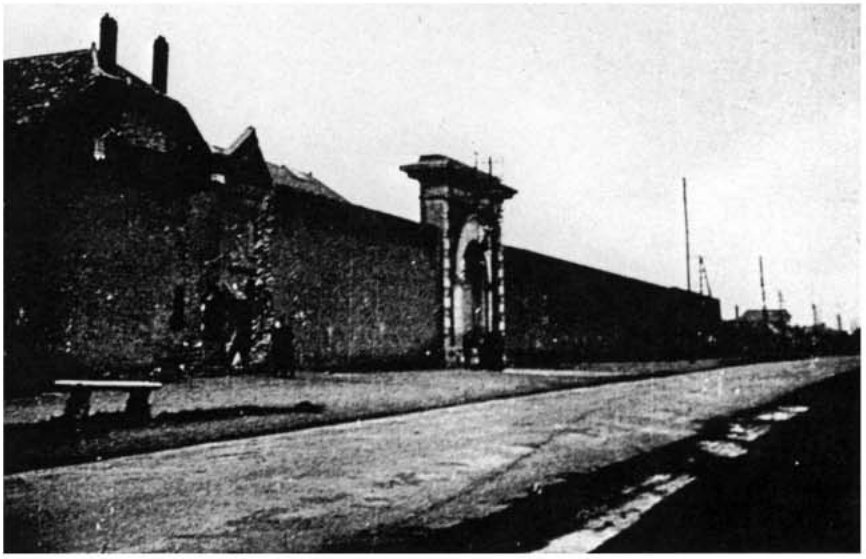
Pickard ordered his reserve — the four remaining No. 21 Squadron aircraft — to return to Hunsdon without attacking but by this time the enemy had begun to hit back. Aircraft of No. 464 ran into a good deal of light flak and the escorting Typhoons were fully occupied fighting off the unwelcome attentions of some hastily scrambled FW 190s. First blood to the Germans was the 'Mossie' of Squadron Leader Ian McRitchie of No. 464 Squadron which was hit whilst still flying at barely more than tree-top level. McRitchie was temporarily blinded and deprived of the use of his left arm by the shell that had instantly killed his navigator, Flight Lieutenant Sammy Sampson, yet somehow he managed to retain control of his stricken aircraft and to make an emergency landing not far from Albert.

What happened next can only be con-



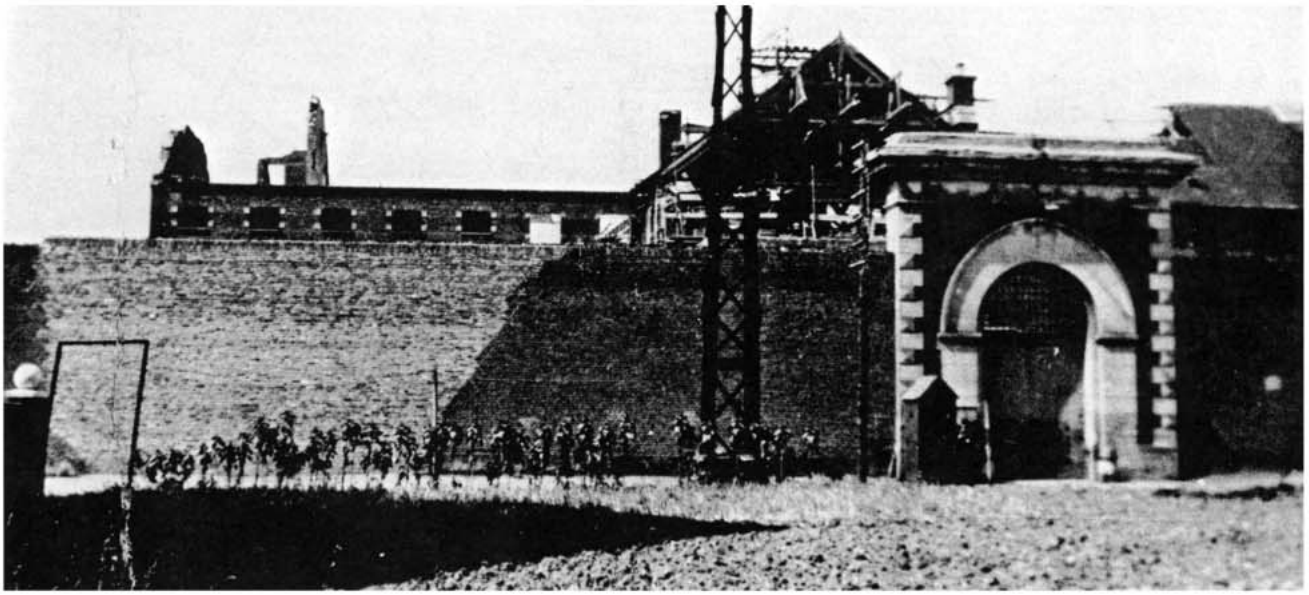
Then and now. The prison has now been completely rebuilt but fortunately for history the outer wall, with the repaired brickwork clearly visible, has been retained (IWM).

Above: **The gap blown in the southern wall beside the main gate photographed by the French or Germans shortly after the raid (IWM).** *Below:* **Some months later, the breach has been sealed with a temporary barricade guarded by a sentry box (IWM).**



Above: **The deserted road outside the jail in 1944 is contrasted with the scene** *(below)* **in 1978 (IWM). The prison authorities have constructed an additional gateway for large vehicles on the left.**

Below: **By the summer of 1944, the wall had been sealed and repairs were continuing on the buildings within. A comparison picture of this view is not possible today due to new houses which have been built in the foreground.**



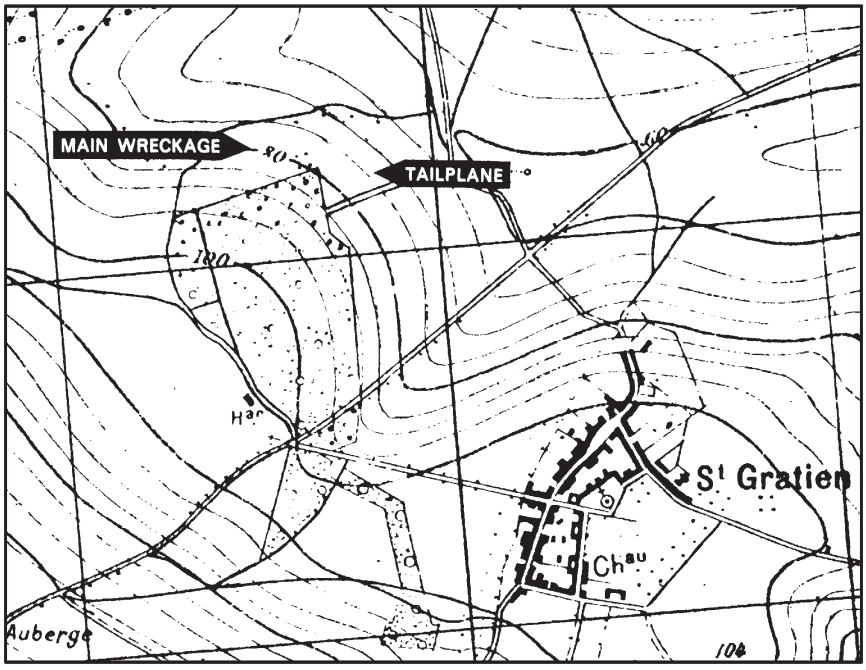
jecture. It seems likely that Pickard had been circling over Amiens but broke off to investigate when he realised that McRitchie had been downed. It would certainly have been typical of Pickard the leader to show so much concern for a 'lame duck' but, on this occasion, he too fell foul of the anti-aircraft gunners and sustained damage that must have made him easy prey for a pair of Focke-Wulfs. Subsequently his machine was seen to fall near Montigny after having its tail section shot away.

Throughout the raid, Tony Wickham had been circling the target in his photographic Mosquito: 'When we came in on our first run we saw how accurate and successful the bombers had been. The ends were blown off the building and the other walls were breached. In the yard we saw a large group of prisoners making good their escape. The fixed cameras in the aircraft were doing their job and the photographer crouched in the nose was using his hand-held camera. It was his enthusiasm which made us stay longer than I considered healthy. After each run I tentatively suggested going home, but his reply was, "Oh, no — come on, just one more!" Finally even he was satisfied and we made back for base. His photographs were good. They showed clearly the flattened building and walls, black on the snow-covered ground, and the released prisoners running in all directions across the yard.'

Some figures seen lying prone in the

'F' for Freddie crashed five miles north-east of the prison near the little village of St. Gratien — M. Souhait working nearby saw what happened: 'A Mosquito came from the direction of Amiens flying at approximately 300 metres followed at approximately 800 metres by a German fighter. The Mosquito banked to the left. Perhaps he had not seen the German. He then received a shell which cut off his tail which fell spinning to the ground as he turned. The aeroplane then flipped over on its back and dived sharply earthwards.' *Above:* The burned-out Mosquito and *below* the crash site today — see map.

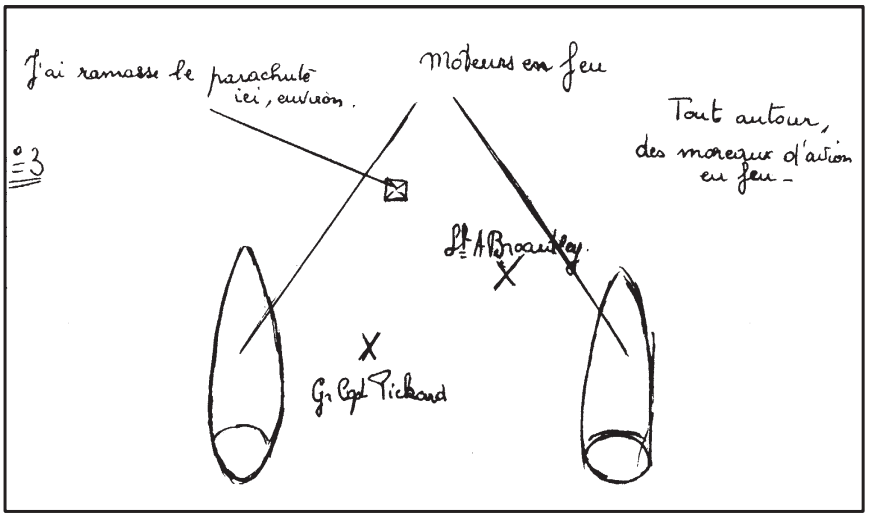
The spot where the tailplane came down. We searched the whole of the field, including the crash site, but no fragments could be found of any description.



courtyard were optimistically assumed to be Germans but the grim likelihood is that they were prisoners, cut down by machine gun fire from guards who survived the attack.

The flight home was an eventful one. One Typhoon had already been lost in the dogfight as the Wing reformed and another was forced down in the Channel by one of the several blizzards that added to the hazards of the return journey whilst a third, crippled by battle damage, was compelled to make an emergency landing at a Sussex airfield. There were emergency landings too for Flight Lieutenant Hanafin, who had been severely wounded when he ran into flak whilst limping back nursing a crippled engine, and for Pilot Officer Sparks whose flak-damaged aircraft was written off in the process.

Meanwhile, at the shattered gaol, there were the scenes of confusion that the planners had anticipated but the miracle that they had hoped for had not materialised. There had always been the slender chance that the raid might have neatly opened the end wall without injuring any of the occupants but realists had recognised that the odds were very much against such a fortunate combination of skill and luck. In the event, bombs had fallen on the main building and widespread damage had been caused to the nearby Hospital of St Victor and about thirty houses in the town.



A French girl Giselle Cage (who would later marry M. Souhait) was, with her father, one of the first on the scene: 'Through the smoke we could see two dark shapes between the engines. We thought they must be the airmen . . . At last they were able to bring the bodies out of the fire and they laid them out on struts of wood from the aeroplane.' The sketch *above* was drawn by Giselle for Alex Hamilton during his research for Pickard's biography 'Wings of Night'.

'I went and retrieved their parachutes and wrapped them in them myself. Captain Pickard still had some scraps of clothing and I cut the wings and ribbons from his jacket to make it more difficult for the bodies to be identified by the Germans. The clothes of Lieutenant Broadley had been completely burned. They were just ashes when he was pulled from the fire. The bodies had not been burned, just a little swollen from the heat . . . we are certain that the two men had been killed by shock on impact as they remained in a sitting position and one of them had his two arms raised and his hands half clenched. He must have been holding the two handles in the cockpit . . . The bodies were taken to the Mayor's house at St. Gratien.'

On the morning of August 31, 1944, Amiens was captured by the 29th Armoured Brigade of the 11th Armoured Division. In the cemetery of St. Pierre, right beside the prison where they had been buried by the Germans, were found the graves of the two airmen. This is John Broadley's grave.

The prison block was in chaos and, with more than 150 dead and injured lying amongst the ruins, there could be no doubt about the first duty of Dr. Mans, head of the Abbeville resistance and one of the 'targets'. Whilst others ran to their freedom, he and an OCM colleague, civil defence head Captaine Tempez, stayed on at the gaol to do whatever they could for the casualties. For their trouble, Tempez died before a firing squad and Mans spent the rest of the war in a labour camp.

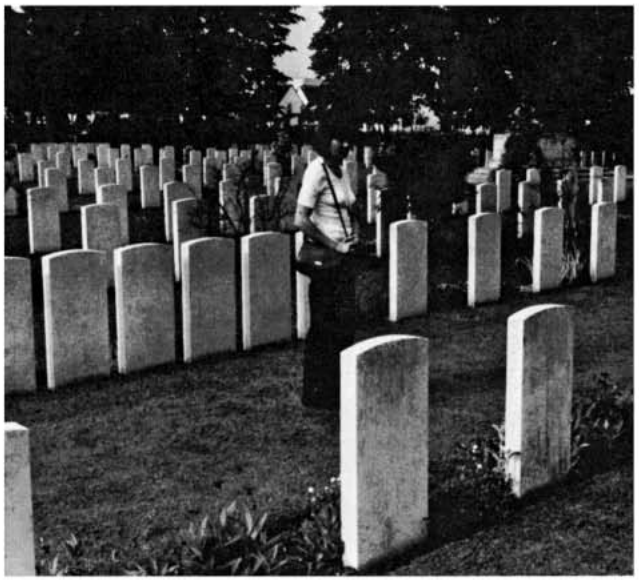
A total of 258 prisoners escaped from the ruins, of whom 179 were criminals, twenty-nine were French 'politicals' and fifty members of the Resistance. Amongst those who gained their freedom were Jean Beaurin, Vivant, Cruel, and Ponchardier's son-in-law. Although the Germans recaptured many escapees during the days that followed, Beaurin vanished into the secret depths of the Communist underground and the local groups made similarly effective arrangements for their key figures. Operation Jericho' had achieved something of value but its cost had been a heavy one.

Ninety-four persons had died in the attack and its aftermath, and ninety-two more had been injured. Fifty of the 180 Resistance workers held in the gaol made their escape, yet records show that after the raid only seventy-four remained in German custody. Thus the casualties must have included fifty-six members of the same Resistance groups for whom the raid was intended to be an 'encouraging gesture' and, with nearly four times as many criminals as patriots amongst those freed, it was scarcely surprising that the local citizens demanded to know why the raid had taken place at all! The Free French in London were also not anxious to acclaim an operation that had such dubious propaganda value and which had freed Beaurin and others who would be amongst their political opponents when they returned to their homeland. Reluctantly it was decided to withhold news of the affair until after the liberation and the story was finally released on October 28, 1944. However, news of Vivant's escape was discreetly leaked to the people of the Amiens and Abbeville areas — although he had only been arrested a mere forty-eight hours before the date originally planned for the raid — in the hope that they might recognise his release as adequate justification for the bloodshed. Later an official report was to claim that the people of Amiens 'applauded' the news of his liberation — certainly the Resistance sent an appreciative signal to London.

Vivant later held office in the Ministry of the Interior in de Gaulle's first government —

Sometime later 'Pick's' grave was marked by the French with an inscription which included the Victoria Cross.

Charles Pickard had been buried in the row in front. On November 3, 1944, Pilot Officer Lea photographed Madamoiselles Faro



Fernande and Marie Yvonne placing flowers on the grave. The prison can be seen in the background (IWM).

a just reward for his heroic efforts at Abbeville whilst 'Pepe' and his comrades, whose activities had led to the raid that had secured his release, sank back into the shadows to continue their own brand of revolution.

We visited Amiens twice for the preparation of this story. The first time, in October 1978, was aborted by persistent fog which made photography of the prison impossible. Nevertheless the repaired breaches in the outer wall in three places were still clearly evident although the actual prison buildings have been rebuilt. A plaque beside the main gate records the incident and services are held each year on February 18 to remember those that died in the attack.

It was our intention not to finalise this story without having undertaken aerial flights over Hunsdon and Amiens. The former was soon accomplished and, from the air, the outline of the aerodrome is easy to recognise although now returned to farmland with all but the odd building demolished.

For the flight at Amiens we returned in April 1979. The obvious airfield to use was Glisy on the outskirts of the city, the one attacked by the Mosquitos in order to keep the resident German squadron on the ground during the raid. Today it is a typical run-down French aerodrome and the hire was arranged of an equally decrepid Piper Cub.

Unfortunately today the city has expanded and spread beyond the prison transforming it into a built-up area and we could not persuade the pilot to descend below the regulation 500 metres. Our dreams of a quick fifty-foot beat-up over the prison, flashing between the sky-scraper tower blocks which now dominate the 1944 approach route, were dashed as we put-puttered overhead. However our purpose was still historic and our intention none the less honourable.

Official records show that the tailplane of Pickard's aircraft fell at Grid Reference 178662 and the forward section and engines at 175663 where M. Gignard-Pinkot, the son of the Mayor of St. Gratien, found the bodies of both pilot and the navigator, Flight Lieutenant John Broadley. Both were later buried at St. Pierre Cemetery at Amiens (Graves 13 in Row B and Grave 11 in Row A of Plot 3). Flight Lieutenant R. W. Sampson, McRitchie's navigator, lies buried at Poix-de-la-Somme churchyard Row E, Grave 25.

Sixteen miles south-west of Amiens lies the Commonwealth War Graves Commission plot within the churchyard at Poix. Here Flight Lieutenant 'Sammy' Sampson, the only other casualty on the raid, was buried.

One last mystery remains to be explained and the editor is indebted to Alex Hamilton, author of Group Captain Pickard's biography 'Wings of Night', for his generosity in allowing us to publish, for the first time, the reasons behind the non-award of the Victoria Cross to Pickard. Alex Hamilton had interviewed Sir Basil Embry, the No. 2 Group Commander, on this matter but had been sworn not to disclose their conversation until after his death. Sir Basil died on December 8, 1977.

Air Vice-Marshal Sir Basil Embry was responsible for organising the details of the raid on Amiens', writes Alex Hamilton. 'He had, in fact, put himself down to lead this very top secret, high-precision raid, as he did not feel, at that time, that Charles Pickard had enough low-level ground attack experience. Sir Basil was correct. He asked me to refer to 'Pick's' log books (three) and that there I would find that Pickard had only carried out "five or six" low-level attacks with No. 2 Group, TAF.

'In the first of these, he led the first attack ever against the V2 launching pads in the area of Pas de Calais, with forty-eight Mosquitos. Basil Embry went along himself, leading the second wave of twenty-four, more or less as a schoolmaster to Charles Pickard and to see how Charles would perform on low-level work. Sir Basil was more than satisfied. On one of these five low-level jobs, Pick managed to return to England after the attack and crossed the Channel on one engine with the other feathered.

'At the last moment, Basil Embry was called before Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham, C-in-C 2nd TAF, to give details on the planning for Amiens. At the very last moment, Basil Embry was forbidden by Coningham to lead the raid and this annoyed him immensely. He tried to explain that he had built up the three squadrons concerned with himself, Basil Embry, as leader. Coningham would have none of it. If shot down, Coningham believed that Basil Embry would be in for a rough time as he knew too much about the planning and, in addition, he had already escaped as a prisoner-of-war and would be eligible for a firing squad if the Germans got their hands on him. Under enormous protest, Basil Embry, as a serving airman, had to obey the rules.

'He was loathe to appoint Charles Pickard as he considered him too valuable a pilot in Bomber Command but, if he went past Charles Pickard who had already been appointed his deputy commander, he would cause "irretrievable hurt" to Pickard by choosing someone more experienced in low-level attack. There was no time for niceties. The date of February 19 was fast drawing nigh and that was D-Day for the shooting by the Gestapo of the French political prisoners out of hand.

'Sir' Basil Embry was in a considerable quandary. Time was against him, the weather was against him and Coningham was against him. It was about the only time in his whole career that Sir Basil felt compelled to disobey

On February 18, 1945 — the first anniversary of the raid — a memorial cross, which had been erected on the crash site of 'F' for Freddie, was dedicated at St. Gratien. Sadly, the passage of time, fading memories and the practicalities of farming have meant the removal of the memorial so that nothing now remains to mark the spot.

Each year on the anniversary of the raid, a service is held beside the main gate of the prison (where the plaque *above* has been attached to the wall). This is followed by a pilgrimage to the graves in St. Pierre's Cemetery. On the 30th Anniversary in 1974, the French welcomed Mrs. Dorothy Pickard who led the procession *(below)* to the graveside.

an order. However, after hours of anguish, he gave into his own reasoning — disciplined from a lifetime in the Royal Air Force — and gave no indication to anyone, least of all Charles Pickard, neither about his own personal misgivings nor the argument with Coningham who would not communicate further except through his ADC. Thus the raid went ahead as planned with Charles Pickard leading instead of Basil Embry. In the event, you are acquainted with the result.

Some considerable time after Amiens and only when it became known that Charles Pickard and Alan Broadley had been killed — as France at that time was still under German domination — did Lord Londonderry, a former Minister of Air, put forward the name of Charles Pickard for the supreme award.

Consideration for the award of the Victoria Cross must be unanimous and it was debated at length. The one man who would not give his full assent was Sir Basil Embry. In his opinion, the raid on Amiens was no more than a normal, if high precision, bombing attack and, as such, did not warrant the award of the VC.

'The official reasons for refusal were stated in an unpublished minute dated December 5, 1944:

i) He had already been sufficiently decorated in relation to other officers with comparable rewards of service

ii) Press reports of his last sortie exaggerated its importance''.

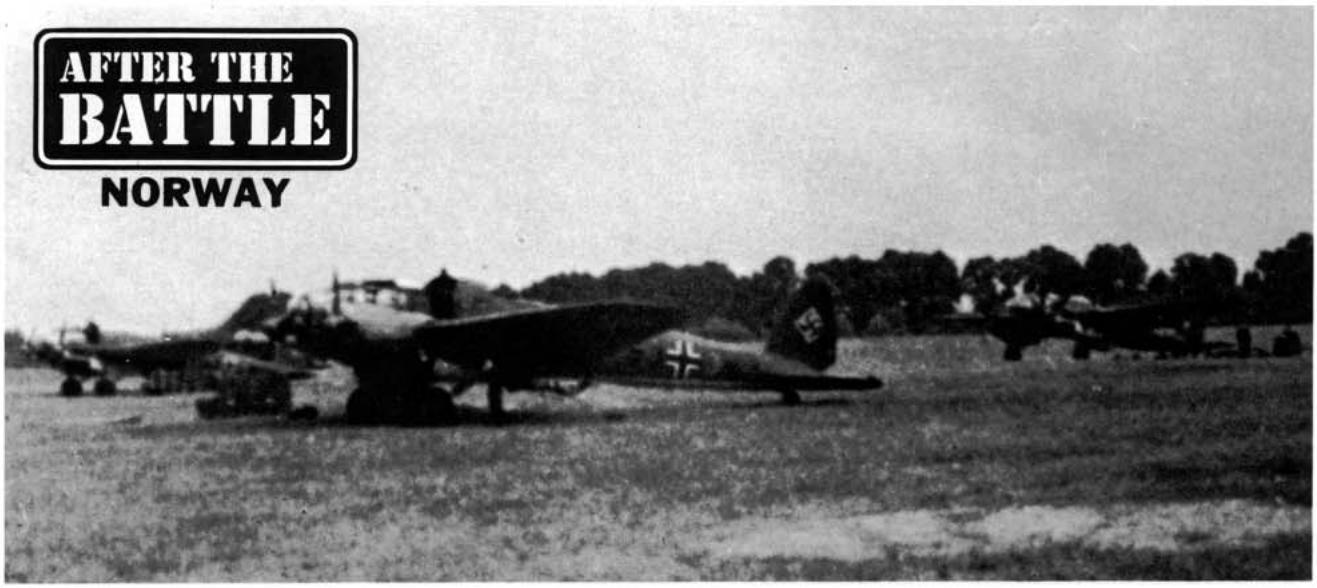
'However, news of the debate had somehow leaked out to the French and on his headstone in St. Pierre Cemetery, very close by the prison of Amiens, they had painted the legend under his name, VC. DSO. DFC. Bars. The French had mixed up the Bars but were very happy with the VC. When the question of the supreme award was resolved, and denied, the Air Ministry requested Pickard's widow, Dorothy, to proceed to France and ask the French to remove the ''VC'' from the marker. Dorothy, accompanied by her thirteen-month-old son, visited France and complied with the request'

For readers interested in the Mosquito in general, we can recommend a recently released stereo cassette 'The Mosquito Story', produced by one of our readers, Iain Erskine of Remma Documentaries, for the Mosquito Aircraft Museum. Narrated by ex-RAF pilot Raymond Baxter, the tape details the history of the aircraft and its spectacular role in the air war together with the nostalgic sound of the Mosquito. Available from the Mosquito Aircraft Museum, Salisbury Hall, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, price £4.00 including post in the UK, or £4.50 overseas.

The Amiens raid was a deed which caught the imagination of the public and the Royal Air Force re-staged the attack at the 1950 Farnborough Air Display (Charles E. Brown).

Above: **In 1945 the Royal Air Force paid tribute to the airmanship of the crews who had taken part on 'Operation Jericho' with an equally impressive low-level beat-up of the prison — still under repair.**

Below: **This precision bombing raid and many others like it were the forte of the 'Mossie' and at Salisbury Hall in Hertfordshire, where the Mosquito prototype was built in 1940, a TT35 has been re-coded EG-F as a memorial to Charles Pickard (Stuart Howe).**



THE SAGA OF A LOST GERMAN BOMBER

BY A. R. CHAPMAN AND BJORN OLSEN

The Luftwaffe's bomber unit Kampfgeschwader 4 *General Wever* took part in the Second World War from its very outset through to its inevitable end. On the morning September 1, 1939, KG 4's Heinkel He 111P bombers struck against the large aerodrome at Lemberg (Lwow) in the eastern part of Poland. Led by the Staffelkapitaen Hauptmann Leythaeuser, they took the Poles completely by surprise and the target was totally destroyed. The route back to base was planned to take the bombers over German-occupied Czechoslovakia, since Leythaeuser did not wish to encounter the Polish fighters which by then would certainly be putting up a brave but hopeless fight.

After leaving the target area one of the aircraft, coded 5J+EN, soon lagged behind, unable to keep up with the rest of the formation after having been hit by Polish flak. After about half-an-hour the crew, Unteroffiziers Guenther Hoelscher (observer and commander of the aircraft), Gotthold Klenk (pilot), Karl Stolz (wireless operator/air gunner) and Willi Stock (flight engineer/air gunner), found themselves alone. They soon realised they had no hope of reaching friendly territory and, unable to keep airborne any longer, Klenk put the Heinkel down in a potato field, still well inside Polish territory. The crew set fire to their aircraft and immediately found themselves surrounded by a most hostile crowd of civilians. Only the resolute behaviour of a local Polish army unit saved the Germans' lives.

During the days that followed they were taken from one place to another, always heavily guarded by Polish soldiers, or perhaps one should say protected as often the guards kept their rifles pointed away from the prisoners and towards the civilians who would have killed the Germans instantly given the chance. Hoelscher's crew experienced what war was really like as bombed out villages and death and destruction were everywhere. Once, on board a train, they were even attacked by aircraft of their own unit. The Heinkels flew so low they could recognize the faces of their own friends in the aircraft. Many of their fellow passengers were killed or wounded in this attack. The prisoners, however, knew the tactics employed by the bombers and were able to dodge the bombs and machine gun fire, something which was soon learned by some smart Poles who followed the Germans' every move, not only to keep an eye on them but to save their own lives.

Later the crew met up with other captured Germans, about sixty in all. After a few days the entire group was herded into an old army camp used to house POWs. On September 17 all the doors were locked and the guards left. A few hours later somebody started shooting at the house and throwing hand-grenades inside. The building soon caught fire. Many of the prisoners were killed by the shooting or burnt to death but miraculously Hoelscher and his fellow crew members managed to break out and escape. Two days later they crossed the Russian border, were taken into custody and moved to Kiev. Fortunately for them this was the time of the Russo-German Pact and it was all 'Russki-Germanski, great friends!', as Hoelscher reminisces today. Five weeks later they were back with KG 4, which was then based at Fassberg in northern Germany.

Top: **The Heinkel He 111Ps of Kampfgeschwader 4 at Fassberg in northern Germany prior to the invasion of Norway and Denmark in April 1940.** *Above:* **Heinkel 5J+CN flanked by KG4 armourers at the time of the Polish campaign.**

'Weseruebung'

After the fighting in Poland was over and the so-called Phoney War period started, KG 4 was brought up to strength in both aircraft and personnel. Prior to 'Weseruebung' (the German invasion of Denmark and Norway), its Heinkels were dispersed at Fassberg, Lueneberg and Perleberg airfields in northern Germany. On the day of the attack, April 9, 1940, the bombers were initially limited to demonstrations of strength to coincide with the German landings. This was done by flying low over Norwegian towns and dropping leaflets over Copenhagen, the Danish capital. But the Norwegians fought back and later in the day

KG 4 bombed some coastal batteries and the military airfield at Kjeller near Oslo.

In the days which followed KG 4 continued its operations against Norwegian targets. The Heinkels flew in support of two army battle groups, Pellengahr and Fischer, with the utmost efficiency. Driving the Norwegian and British defenders before them, the two groups quickly advanced up the Oesterdal and Gudbrandsdal valleys. A couple of weeks after the invasion, the German advance had proceeded so far north that their supporting bombers could take on other targets as well. KG 4's Heinkels joined the 120 aircraft of KG 26, KG 30 and Kampfgruppe 100 in the attacks against Aandalsnes and Namsos, two small towns which had become Allied strongpoints. The Luftwaffe put considerable effort into their destruction and, Allied air opposition being virtually non-existent, even repeated the same routine every day. The first raid started at 11.00 a.m., the second three hours later and the third and last at 5.00 p.m. all lasting for about one hour. Usually the German aircraft came in low, dropped their bombs and flew back southwards machine-gunning everything in sight, civilian as well as military targets.

On April 22 Hoelscher's crew, which had taken part in the campaign flying a He 111P-1 coded 5J+CN, flew to Oslo from their base at Fassberg to work out approach and landing procedures at Fornebu, the runway there being considered somewhat dangerous by the Luftwaffe after many crashes had taken place. On their return to Germany they briefed KG 4 on the matter and next day the whole unit transferred to Fornebu. Hoelscher, who had been promoted to Oberfeldwebel, now had a new pilot. Klenk had left the crew in accordance with a rule which laid down that men who had lost their father in the First World War and were the only son, i.e. nominally head of the family, could be excused from serving in operational units. His place had been taken by Feldwebel Richard Gumbrecht, fresh from flying school and considered a good pilot, albeit without war experience.

On April 24 5J+CN attacked Namsos, encountered strong anti-aircraft fire, but was able to return unharmed to Fornebu.

In a desperate effort to stop the Luftwaffe, eighteen Gloster Gladiator biplane fighters of No. 263 Squadron, Royal Air Force, were despatched to frozen Lake Lesjaskogsvatn, arriving on the 24th. The following day the Luftwaffe turned their attention to these fighters. Repeated heavy attacks were made

Welcomed back to KG4 at Fassberg after their Polish escapade by their Staffelkaepitan, Hauptmann Leythaeuser (the officer in the leather coat with his back to the photographer) are Unteroffiziers Klenk (who was later replaced by Gumbrecht), Hoelscher, Stock and Stolz. The aircraft is one of the Geschwader's Ju52/3ms.

It was fairly common in the Luftwaffe for the captain of the aircraft not to be the pilot. Guenther Hoelscher served in the role of observer and held the rank of Oberfeldwebel (Flight Sergeant) on his Heinkel's last sortie.

Feldwebel (Sergeant) Richard Gumbrecht, the new pilot of Heinkel 5J+CN.

Willi Stock pictured while serving in the Wehrmacht prior to joining the Luftwaffe.

Unteroffizier (Corporal) Karl Stolz, the wireless operator/air gunner.

throughout the day, Hoelscher's Heinkel taking part in two of them. Losses were great on both sides: at the end of the day all but four of the Gladiators had been destroyed, six of the German bombers shot down and at least eight damaged.

Although this meant the end of No. 263 Squadron, if only temporarily, the Luftwaffe now also started to encounter aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm. Blackburn Skuas from the aircraft carriers HMS *Ark Royal,* and HMS *Glorious* shot down two Heinkels on the 25th. They also attempted to maintain fighter cover over Aandalsnes but were not able to prevent the bombing owing to the numerical superiority of the attackers.

Above: **The railway station at Aandalsnes in 1940. Held by the British, this was the target for 5J+CN on April 26 (Jernbanemuseet).** *Below:* **Today, except for the rolling stock, it has changed little.**

Shot down

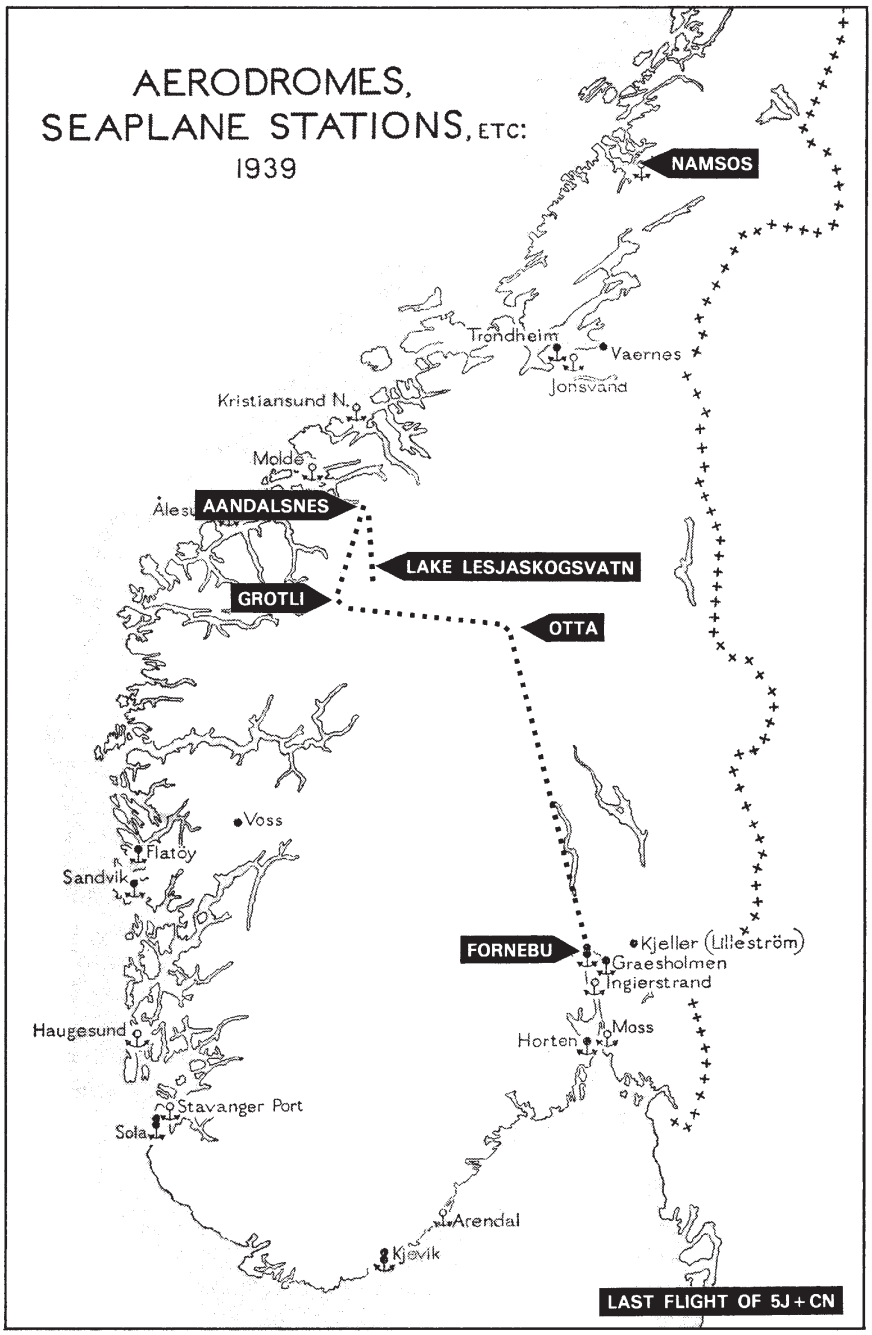
Early in the morning of April 26 three of KG 4's crews boarded their Heinkels at Fornebu. At 7.30 a.m. they were airborne and, as 5J+CN rose from the airfield, little did Hoelscher and his crew realise that this day was going to change the lives of three of them and end it for the fourth. The Kette of Heinkels had been ordered to fly an armed reconnaissance along the road Otta-Grotli-Geiranger and to look for signs of Allied activity. Any targets found were to be attacked. Alternatively they were briefed to attack targets in Aandalsnes — in 5J+CN's case the railway station.

Flying low along the briefed route the aircraft spotted no Allied troops and everything was quiet. They therefore turned towards Aandalsnes, easy to find because the town was still burning from earlier attacks. Passing over Romsdalsfjord they were fired on by the cruiser HMS *Manchester* which, unknown to the crew, hit 5J+CN's starboard engine. Attacking the cruiser would have amounted to suicide so the Heinkels continued towards Aandalsnes.

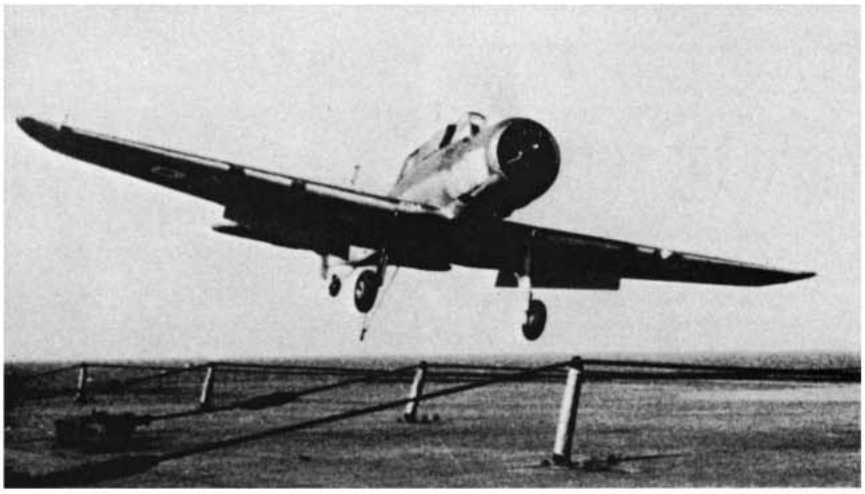
The same morning six Skuas of No. 801 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm, had taken off from HMS *Ark Royal*. They had orders to carry out a fighter patrol over Norwegian and British troops near Aandalsnes and had been briefed to fly at the maximum height to which the Skua could climb, about 16,000 feet. This meant they could stay over the area for about one hour before returning to the aircraft carrier, a most uncomfortable time considering they had no oxygen.

The bombers attacked their targets unopposed and were just reforming for the return flight when suddenly the inevitable happened: the Skuas pounced on the

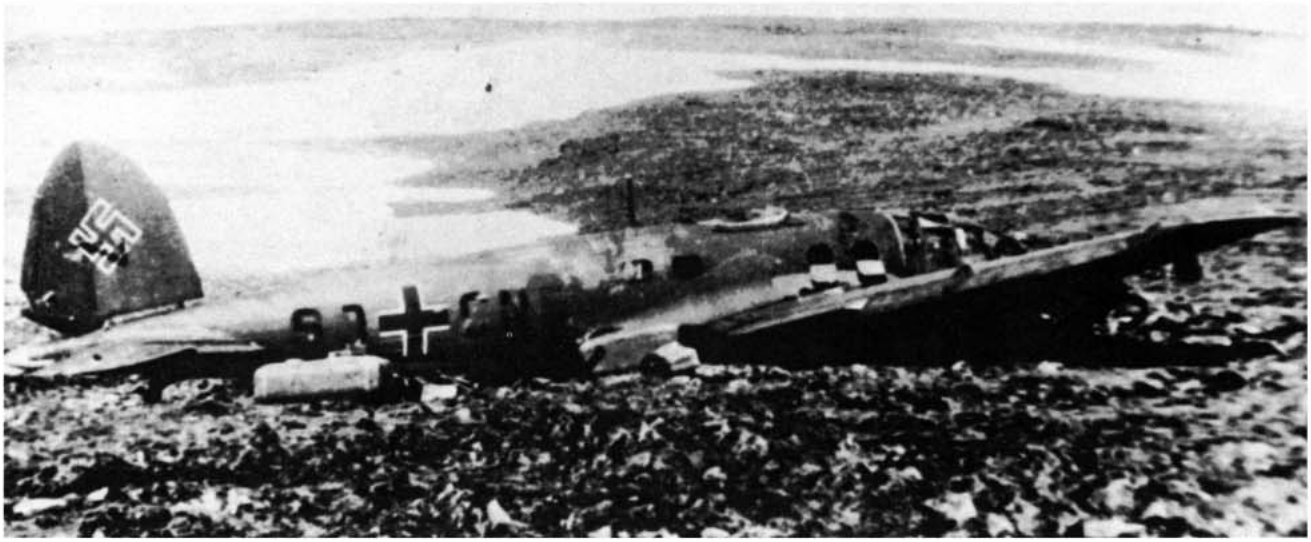
Above: **Commander H. P. Bramwell, DSO, DSC, (pictured when Commander (Flying) of HMS *Pretoria Castle* in 1944) pilot of Skua A7-A of No. 801 Squadron, Fleet Air Arm (IWM).** *Below:* **Lieutenant W. H. Martyn, DSC and Bar, piloted the second Skua A7-C.**



Heinkels. For some reason, which the crew could not then understand, 5J+ CN had been unable to formate with the other two Heinkels and Hoelscher's crew once again found itself in the unhappy position of the straggler. It was, in fact, the damage done by the shell from the British cruiser which was causing the engine to malfunction. No. 801 Squadron's commander, Lieutenant-Commander H. P. Bramwell, flying Skua A7-A and Lieutenant W. H. Martyn in A7-C singled out Hoelscher's Heinkel as their target and pressed home their attack. They caught the Germans completely by surprise and the first burst hit the flight engineer, Willi Stock, who had manned the ventral machine gun. The bullets from the next attack hammered into the starboard engine which immediately began to emit smoke. Having noticed that the ventral gun was silent, Bramwell and Martyn attacked from behind and below, making defence very difficult for Stolz in the dorsal position. Even so he managed to score a few hits on Bramwell's Skua, but could not hinder the British aircraft's last attack in which they scored several hits both in the fuselage and the port engine. During this attack Stolz was hit



A Blackburn Skua, the first monoplane to enter Fleet Air Arm service, lands back on HMS Ark Royal. Primarily a dive bomber, it was armed with four wing-mounted Brownings and a Lewis in the rear cockpit (IWM).



The Heinkel on the Digervarden plateau photographed by the 16-year-old Oeystein Moelmen in 1945 — the year he buried the dead crewman Willi Stock.

three times and Hoelscher escaped death by a miracle: he had just gone back to see what had happened to Stock when a neat row of bullets punctured the fuselage exactly where he had been sitting. Fortunately for the Germans the Skuas had by now used all their ammunition and Bramwell called in a third Skua, A7-B flown by Sub-Lieutenant B. F. Wigginton, to finish off the Heinkel.

In the meantime, inside the Heinkel, Gumbrecht struggled to keep airborne. The starboard engine had overheated and had to be stopped while the other was still running — just. Gumbrecht considered it was time for baling out, but both Hoelscher and Stolz disagreed since it would mean leaving the presumably unconscious Stock in the crashing aircraft. Unable to keep the bomber in the air Gumbrecht was left with no alternative but to try a belly-landing somewhere among the snow-covered mountains. They hit the ground just short of the highest mountain top and the heavy bomber skidded along on the snow for some 300 metres before it finally came to rest, remarkably undamaged, near Digervarden, a high mountain plateau south of Lesjaskog.

By this time Sub-Lieutenant Wigginton's Skua had arrived on the scene and scrambling out of the Heinkel the three survivors were met by a terrifying sight: a Skua coming in low to make sure of the kill. The dark figures against the blinding white snow were easy targets and the Germans helplessly watched the Skua. With a thunderous roar the British aircraft passed overhead, made a turn and came back for one more pass but not a shot was fired.

Fight for survival

For Hoelscher's crew the fight was over — or was it? They knew that the German army was advancing fast so, instead of going down into the nearby valley where capture was inevitable, they decided to try to reach Kvam, a place where German troops had reportedly broken through the Allied lines.

Stock was left behind in the aircraft. Examining him, the others found he must have been killed instantly by the Skuas' fire and there was nothing they could do apart from wrapping a tarpaulin around him and placing him in the wireless compartment. Hoelscher reckoned they would soon meet up with their own troops and then both Stock and the aircraft could be recovered. Besides, the other two Heinkels had seen them going down. So, together with Gumbrecht and Stolz, Holescher set out in the deep snow.

After a few hours, still being fairly close to 5J+ CN, they saw a Heinkel flying low over the wreck. The aircraft was flown by the Staffelkapitaen Hauptmann Leythaeuser and in a letter he wrote to Gumbrecht's parents a few days later he said: 'On the afternoon of the same day (April 26), I flew over the (crash) site myself, footprints in the snow leading from the aircraft into the valley further convincing me of their escape. Consequently I am able to report their being alive and making their way to their own lines'. However, as hard as they tried, the three survivors failed to attract Leythaeuser's attention.

They continued into the Lora valley. From up on the mountain side they had spotted a farm there but, as they came nearer, they saw a track in the snow leading to it and decided it was too dangerous to approach any closer. Instead they carried on until they found a cottage where they sought cover, catching a little sleep as they were totally exhausted. Soon they were on their way again.

They had discovered that the snow carried them best during the night and early morning before it was warmed by the sun and, after four terrible days, they had covered nearly forty-five kilometres but by then Gumbrecht had become snowblind and the wounded Stolz was unable to carry on. Instead of going further towards Kvam, Hoelscher therefore decided they should break into a cottage and wait there for the German advance to reach them and a little mountain hut west of Dombaas became their refuge.

Capture

Unknown to them a Norwegian soldier, Private Per Hansen, had seen their tracks in the snow. He had himself been captured in Oslo on April 9 and taken to Fornebu. While a prisoner he had noticed the characteristic footprints made by German flying boots. On this day, April 30, he once again saw these footprints. With a ski patrol he followed the tracks to the hut. Ready to fight, the patrol was suddenly challenged by other Norwegian soldiers who told them they had captured three German airmen in the hut. The exhausted Germans were brewing cocoa and the Norwegians shared their own food with them before taking them to Dombaas.

Later Hoelscher's crew was taken back to the place they had bombed, Aandalsnes, and handed over to the British. During the night of May 2 they were taken on board HMS *Manchester* and evacuated to Scapa Flow, often receiving harsh treatment from the British guards. From Scapa Flow the journey continued by train to London where the crew was split up. Stolz was sent to a hospital in Woolwich where he spent a couple of weeks recovering from his wounds. On July 15 the others were sent to Canada and Stolz followed them a little later. The remaining war years were spent in different camps in Canada and the crew soon lost touch with each other. In 1946 they were sent back to Britain and, almost a year later, they finally returned to Germany.

Guenther Hoelscher, the tall airman on the left, arrives in Scotland (IWM).

The wreck in 1973 when visited by one of our joint authors Bjorn Olsen. Thirty-three years' exposure had weathered the paintwork so that its pre-war code letters were now visible. Souvenir hunters had removed many parts.

Forgotten aircraft

In the mountains, stillness settled over 5J+CN. Although the commander of 5. Staffel of KG 4 had flown over the aircraft on the 26th, nothing was done to recover it or find out what had happened to the crew. A little later KG 4 was withdrawn from operations in Norway, one Gruppe being equipped with Junkers Ju 88s and sent into action against the French and British on the Western Front, later taking part in the Battle of Britain. The aircraft at Digervarden was forgotten.

During the war years only a few Norwegians found the bomber and wisely they all kept quiet about it. One of them was Oeystein Moelmen, a boy of fourteen when he first found the Heinkel in 1943. It was then almost completely covered in snow and he made up his mind to return in the summer to investigate his find closer. On his second visit he entered the aircraft, curious as youngsters are, and suddenly found himself face to face with Willi Stock. Young Oeystein turned and ran and, although the aircraft was visited several times, it took another two years before he mustered enough courage to take the body out and bury it under a simple wooden cross. It was a grim job for a young boy but something he just had to do to get peace of mind.

Oeystein, however, was not satisfied with this. He wanted to find out the identity of the man he had buried and the story behind this amazingly complete aircraft he had found. So he started his search. Unaccustomed as he was to the ways and means of aviation historical research, it was a long job and twenty-seven years and many a letter passed before he was able to pick up the telephone and speak to Gumbrecht, who now lived in West Germany. Only at that late date could Stock's relatives be informed about his fate. Sadly his wife had died in 1965, believing to her last day that her Willi would return. However his two elder brothers were still alive and, most important, he had a daughter, Anneliese, born after his death. Early in the 1950s Stock's body had been exhumed and reburied in the German War Cemetery in Oslo as one of the war's many 'Unbekannter' (Unknowns). Now his name could be engraved on the headstone. Willi Stock had found his final resting place.

Visit to the wreck

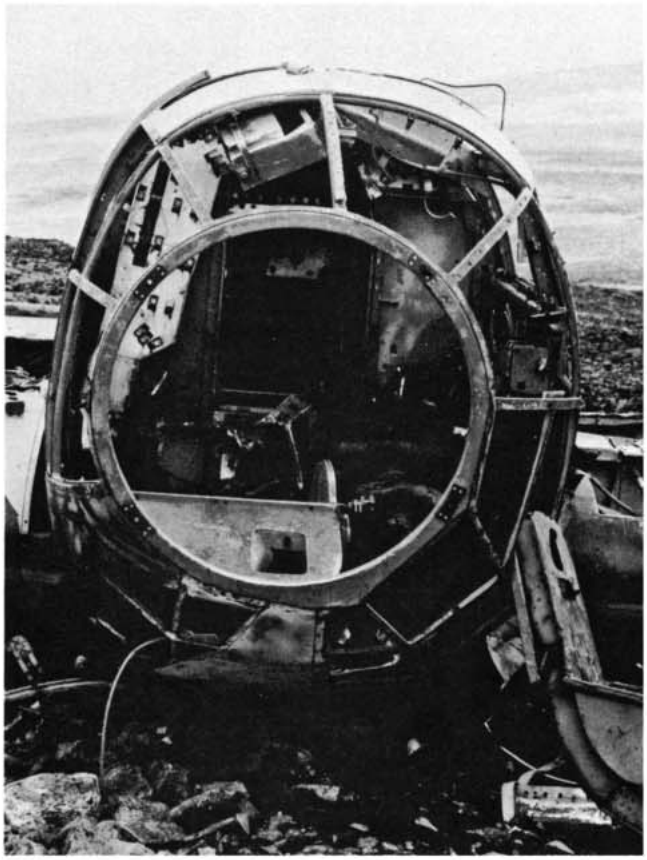
On August 11, 1973 one of the authors, Bjorn Olsen, together with two other members of the Norwegian Aviation Historical Society, visited the aircraft. Following a seven-hour drive from Oslo they arrived at Lesja during the night which allowed them only a few hours' sleep before they set out on what was to be a very hard climb. The terrain where the Heinkel lay was very rocky and the aircraft rested close to the highest point in the area. After nearly three hours tough walking and climbing they had reached Digervarden but where was the aircraft? Looking all around them they saw nothing but rock, rock and more rock.

Despite a thorough search they were still unable to find it and dejectedly decided to make their way back. Fortunately they took another route and suddenly a shout of joy! Head-on lay the Heinkel. Thirty-three years in the open had naturally taken its toll and almost all the paint on top of the fuselage and wings had peeled off making the aircraft very difficult to spot. The weather had even changed the war-time coding back to 33+C25, the pre-war markings of Kampfgeschwader 253. Two types of Balkenkreuz could be seen on both sides of the wings, one with narrow and the other with a broad white outline and on top of the fuselage was the letter C.

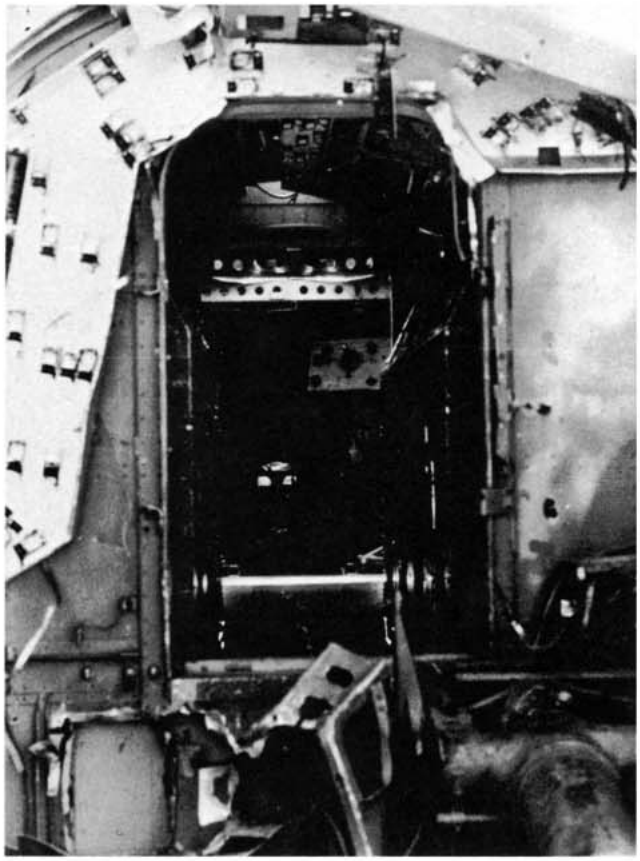
All the perspex and glass had been broken, some in the belly-landing but most by post-war visitors. Smaller components had been ripped out of the fuselage but, fortunately, many of them still lay round the aircraft. Although both wings had separated from the fuselage, this had apparently occurred without damage to either.

Propellor blades are popular trophies and someone had sawn off five of them with a hack-saw. The engines had fallen off their bearings causing damage, both to the bearings themselves and especially to the undercarriages. In the years immediately after the war rubber was in short supply and some of the first items that appeared to have been removed from the wreck were the self-sealing fuel tanks in the wings. The covers above and below these tanks had also disappeared, likewise most of the fabric on the control surfaces. One of the largest items missing was the complete rudder, exappropriated by Canadian 'aviation enthusiasts' early in the 1970s.

Hoelscher's lucky escape. The line of .303in bullet holes beside the observer's seat.



All the perspex windows had been broken although this facilitated entry to the interior through the nose.



View from the cockpit looking aft past the bomb racks into the wireless compartment.

Because the Heinkel had landed in deep snow and sunk slowly through as it melted, the underside of the fuselage was remarkably intact although the ventral gun position (called the 'deathbed' on this type of aircraft) had been pushed in. Bullet holes could be found on the starboard side of the cockpit below the observer's hatch, which was still easily moveable. More bullet holes were found on the starboard wing, but these had been patched up and were obviously reminders of damage sustained earlier in the war.

Captain Oeystein Moelmen masterminded the complete recovery and restoration programme. He has faced a host of problems during the project including public criticism in Norway as to why so much effort should be spared preserving a German war relic.

The easiest way to enter the bomber was now through the nose. The pilot's seat lay loose, but all his instruments were gone. A wooden shutter, used to cover the bombsight when the observer manned the frontal machine gun, was still in place and worked well as did the control column. The paint inside was shiny and bright, looking as if it had only been applied the day before. Moving further back one passed eight bomb racks, four on each side. These still looked complete, even down to the electrical indicator plates. (Most other number plates had been removed but the identity of the aircraft has since been established as Werk Nummer 1526 built in 1938.) Further back one reached the compartment which had been occupied by the flight engineer and the wireless operator both having, as already mentioned, also doubled up as gunners. Again all the instruments and equipment were gone, but many saddle-type machine gun magazines were found together with lots of empty cartridges, signs of the battle thirty-three years previously. The inside of the fuselage was very narrow and one could easily imagine how little space there had been with all the equipment in place.

Although the work of the vandals was very evident, structurally the aircraft seemed undamaged. Consequently, although it was appreciated that the restoration of 5J+CN would be a major job, it was not seen to be impossible. There was very little rust and most parts looked repairable.

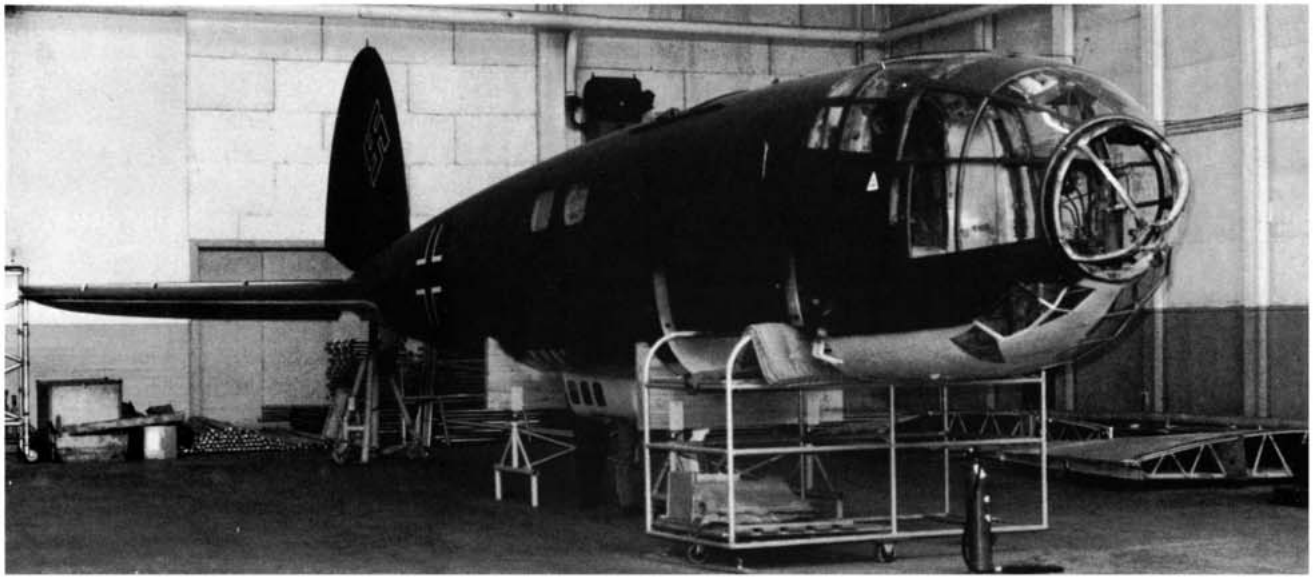
At that time only one complete, original Heinkel He 111 was in existence anywhere in the world. That was the H-23 preserved by the Royal Air Force Museum, a Junkers Jumo-engined transport version. The Lesja aircraft was an early P-variant with Daimler-Benz DB 601 engines and, furthermore, as the main role of the He 111 had been bombing, 5J+CN was considered to be far more representative of the type than the aircraft in England. Consequently it seemed well worth preserving.

The Norwegian Aviation Historical Society raised the matter with the Ministry of Defence, which, in turn, passed the matter on to the Royal Norwegian Air Force. After meetings with the interested parties, a go-ahead was given and the time came to start preparations for the recovery itself. By this time Oeystein Moelmen, having chosen the air force for his career, had risen to the rank of captain and he was a natural choice to lead the recovery team.

Late in the summer of 1976, technicians were flown up to the Heinkel by helicopter. Under Captain Moelmen's able leadership they dismantled the aircraft within a week and also collected all the loose parts lying around it. Very annoyingly the pilot's seat had been stolen just two weeks before the recovery commenced. Everything was taken to Gardermoen Air Base to be sorted out and soon afterwards the restoration started in earnest.

Preservation

As expected the restoration turned out to be a difficult task. Attention was first given to the fuselage which had had to be split into three sections to facilitate lifting down by helicopter from the mountains. During 1977 each piece was completely restored although it was decided to leave some of the bullet holes as they were. Two problems arose during this phase of the work: the plexiglass and the ventral gun gondola. They were overcome by moulding each of the many panes individually — a very time-consuming job — and making a completely new gondola from original drawings. By the end of the year all the sections had been joined together and the fuselage painted in a dark grey primer, to which markings were added.



Above: **June 1978 — the fuselage begins to take on some of its former glory and, by mid-February 1979** *(below),* **the Heinkel was sitting squarely on its own two feet in the former Luftwaffe hangar at Gardermoen.**

In 1978 the tempo was forced to slow down due mainly to the servicing requirements of the operational aircraft on the base. Captain Moelmen still spent much of his time on the restoration, including many, many off-duty hours. By the middle of the year the centre-section was in place, a very tricky job allowing few errors. Later that year both undercarriage components were installed, the starboard was 5J+CN's original but the port had to be taken from the wreck of another He 111. Now, at least, the aircraft stood on its own feet, so to speak.

All the time the search for the missing parts continued and it was really amazing to discover what was available from different sources. The rudder came from a sunken aircraft near Bodo and, much to Captain Moelmen's joy, even the original pilot's seat eventually turned up. Final jobs that year were the mounting of the starboard wing, restoring one engine by utilizing almost all available parts and finishing the two propellers.

Early in 1979 the port wing was fitted in place. The bomb racks had also been restored and installed followed by the starboard engine. Now it was time to start the work inside the aircraft. All the communications equipment and almost all instruments were ready for installation but now Captain Moelmen ran up against a problem. Where to put them? The various marks of the He 111 differed considerably when it came to instrumentation, even from one sub-variant to another and Captain Moelmen had to scrutinize microfilms of handbooks for hours and hours to get things right. In the end he triumphed and by August the inside of the aircraft looked almost complete.

However the port engine still posed a problem. Amongst other damage, the bearing was found to be bent and DB 601 engines and their bearings are hard to come by these days. At the time of writing this problem has not been solved, but Captain Moelmen hopes he will find the required parts on other wrecks somewhere in Norway. When that engine is finally back in place and a few other smaller things fixed, there remains only the final paint job before this unique aircraft is fully restored.

It may all sound quite simple now but Captain Moelmen and his dedicated team have put an enormous effort into getting the aircraft back the way it was. They have been painstakingly accurate in their work, allowing no short-cuts or rush-jobs. As many original parts have been used as possible, others having been taken from other Heinkel wrecks in the country. A few have proved impossible to locate and new ones had to be fabricated at Gardermoen.

Spending time and money on restoring a former enemy aircraft has not proved popular in every quarter in Norway, although reaction has been largely positive. The Norwegians have, so far, no aviation museum as such and perhaps little understanding of what aircraft restoration really means. Only in recent years has the country had an aircraft preservation movement but those who have been involved with the Heinkel affair in one way or another now hope that this aircraft, representing a time which is such an important part of the country's history, will one day form the backbone of a museum. Perhaps then Captain Moelmen and his team will get the recognition they deserve so well.

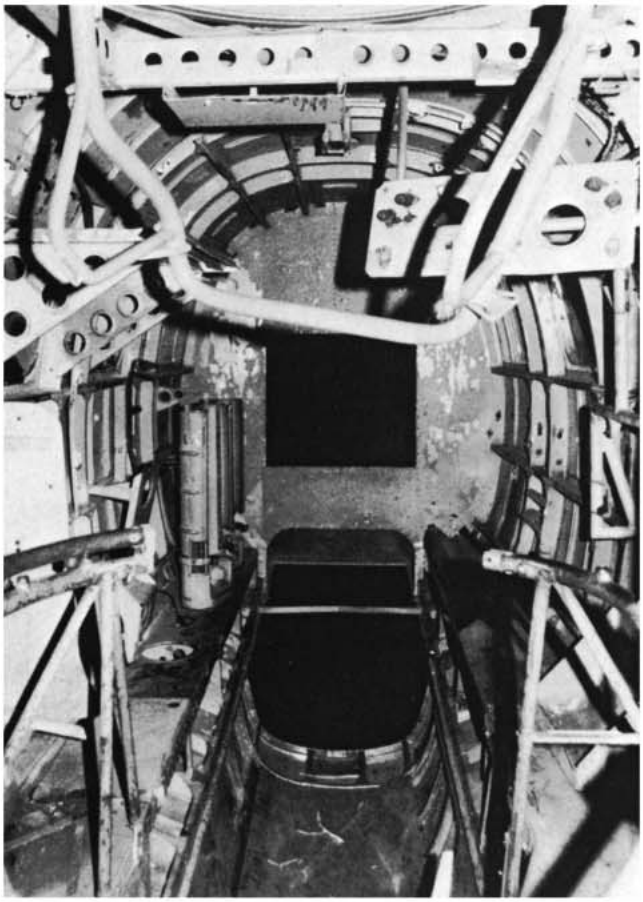
The German crew

Following correspondence on an entirely different subject, a friendship developed between the two authors, one an Englishman living in Germany and the other a Norwegian. In December 1976 Olsen mentioned the Heinkel for the first time. Chapman, being on the staff of Germany's *Modell-Magazin* was not slow to catch on. The story immediately triggered his interest and he became obsessed with the thought of the men involved. Who were they? Were all, or some, still alive? What happened to them? What were they doing today?

Captain Moelmen did nothing to lessen the interest when he asked Chapman if he could help him obtain a photo of Willi Stock. Then the ball really started rolling. After a long search Stock's brother was located. He was most helpful and soon Captain Moelmen had a photo of the German to whom he was, in a strange way, so close.

Captain Moelmen had provided Gumbrecht's address and the next step was to get in touch with him. Gumbrecht's career as a bomber pilot had been very short and from the time he was captured he had had no contact with, or interest in, military aviation. When he returned home to Germany in 1947 he had taken over the family business and today he lives peacefully as a confectioner in Heilbronn in West Germany. Gumbrecht was able to provide a lot of information so that the search for his fellow crew members could continue.

Next on the list was Karl Stolz. The address Chapman had obtained proved invalid but a helpful neighbour sent him on the right track which lead to an address in Heilbronn not far from where Gumbrecht lived! However although Stolz had been found he turned out to be somewhat reluctant to give any information. For him the war was over long ago and should now be forgotten. After his return he had built up a small business as a carpenter but he was now retired and wanted to think about more pleasant things than the war years. Nevertheless, when Chapman told him the Heinkel had been recovered and was being restored, his interest was awakened. He was also very pleased to hear what Captain



Getting the interior instrumentation correct was a long, painstaking job. *Left:* **The wireless compartment as it was and** *right* **after installation of the equipment.**

Moelmen had done for Willi Stock (who had been a very close friend of his) and, not least, that his erstwhile pilot was alive and lived only a few minutes away. Stolz's attitude soon changed completely and he promised to do everything he could to help trace his former commander, Oberfeldwebel Hoelscher.

Hoelscher's case was a tough nut to crack. After his return from Canada nobody had heard anything from him although it was believed that he had lived in or near Hamburg for some time. Requests to German, British, Canadian and Norwegian authorities proved fruitless and Chapman nearly gave up hope of ever finding him. He mentioned this to Stolz and suddenly the latter remembered somebody had told him that Hoelscher had married a woman from Weinheim. A quick call to telephone inquiries revealed that there was only one Guenther Hoelscher in Weinheim. Chapman took down the number, dialled it and when a man replied said, 'Herr Hoelscher — does the code 5J+CN mean anything to you?' Five long years passed (or so Chapman felt) before the reply came back, 'Yes — my old aircraft'. The whole crew had been found!

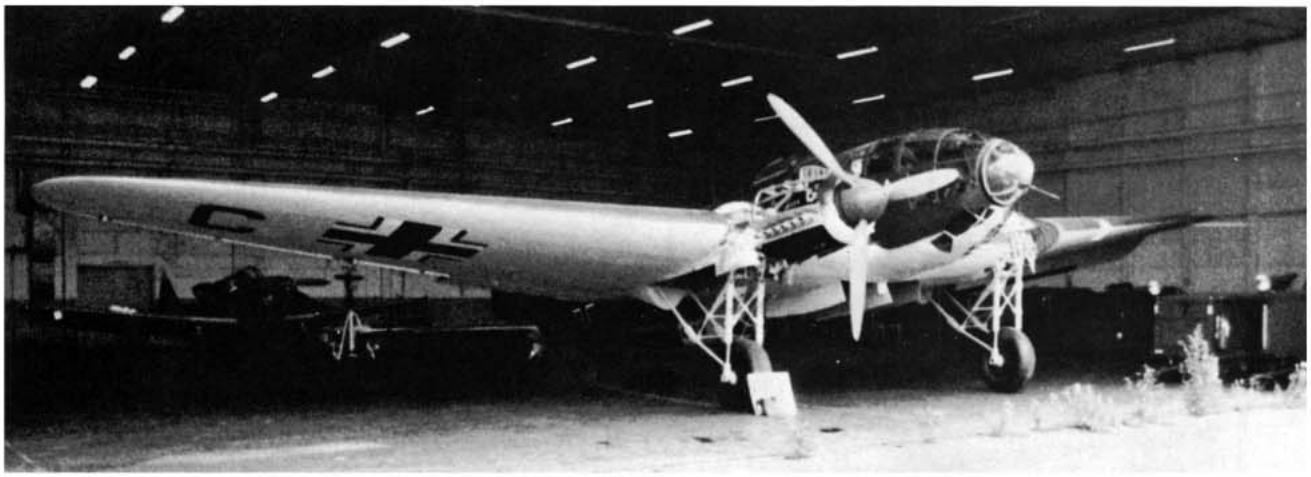
During the captivity in Canada Hoelscher had lost all touch with his crew. He did not, of course, know anything about the upsurge of interest in his aircraft or the fate of his flight engineer. After his return in 1947 he had performed sundry jobs before later joining the re-born Luftwaffe. During his career he had attained the rank of Oberstleutnant and when found had just retired. Suddenly he was confronted with that fateful day in 1940, almost exactly thirty-seven years before and, with his excellent power of memory, it was just as it if had all happened yesterday.

The long search was fully rewarded on September 4, 1977. That day, in Hoelscher's pleasant home, the three met again for the first time since 1940 over an excellent dinner laid on by *Modell-Magazin*. The engines roared again as they talked and it all came back easily to them: the attack — the crash — the terrible trek through the snow — their capture and handing over to the British — the transport to Britain and the marathon train journey from Scapa Flow to London and interrogation in the so-called 'Kensington Cage'. The long years in Canada, filled with uncertainty and anxiety, were also discussed and they were able to tell each other how they had got back on their feet again in bombed-out Germany. And, of course, they did not forget the fate of their friend Willi Stock. They also spoke of the idea of a meeting on friendlier terms with the British airmen who had sealed their fate.

The British crew

The detailed war-time records of No. 801 Squadron quickly established who had shot down the Heinkel. Lieutenant-Commander Bramwell's and Lieutenant Martyn's reports tallied exactly with the Germans' story. Although the Skua had a crew of two, the only names available were those of the pilots, so the search was concentrated on them — regretfully without real success. The British Ministry of Defence reported that Bramwell

The only members from the British Skuas who were still living were John Collett from A7-A *(left)* **and Reg Davies** *(right)* **from A7-C. The pilots of both aircraft had died in 1975.**



August 13, 1979 and 5J + CN awaits the reunion of former adversaries at Gardermoen.

had died in 1975 and the address they provided for Martyn proved to be invalid. No trace could be found of his whereabouts until Olsen suddenly stumbled across his name in a book written by a former naval pilot. The book also gave an important clue: Lieutenant Martyn was a Canadian. A letter was immediately sent to Canada's Ministry of Veterans Affairs but their reply brought the unhappy news that he too had died in 1975.

So we were left with two nameless gunners to find. After having tried for some time to establish their identity, we were told about an organisation called the Telegraphist Air Gunner Association. Their Mr. Ken Sims proved an invaluable help and soon Martyn's gunner was located. He turned out to be Reg W. Davies living in Farnham in England where he had his own business in interior fittings. Davies was most enthusiastic about the whole story including the idea of a reunion with the German crew.

One man had still to be accounted for: the man who flew in the back seat of Bramwell's Skua. By then we had learned that he had been a Lieutenant John W. Collett and again Ken Sims came to the rescue. Through him we learnt that Collett had stayed on in the Royal Navy until his retirement as a full Captain in 1969. A letter was despatched poste haste via Whitehall and a few days later, Collett, today an active businessman, was able to fill in the last missing details. He too remembered the incident well and recalled how frightened he had been and, as the flight's navigator, how worried he was that the *Ark Royal* might have changed her position to avoid the unwelcome attention of German submarines. Like all the others Collett was most enthusiastic at the thought of meeting his foe of yesterday.

The reunion

So, what was more natural than to organise a reunion in the form of a meeting of Germans, Englishmen and Norwegians in front of the restored Heinkel? And so it was to be. On August 13, 1979, almost forty years after the battle, the great day arrived but not without its fair share of last-minute hitches which more than taxed the patience of the organisers. The powers behind this remarkable reunion were a Norwegian magazine, *Vi Menn*, and the Norwegian journalist Knut A. Nilsen. From the very beginning *Vi Menn* had agreed to fly in Collett and Davies but, when the all-important Heinkel crew suddenly found itself without a sponsor, it was the infinite dedication to the cause and the generosity of Nilsen that saved the day. He had just completed writing a book on the events leading up to the loss of 5J+ CN and the crew's subsequent escapade and just could not face up to the soul-destroying thought of the whole project folding at the very last moment so he delved deeply into the family kitty to ensure that the bomber crew were on the scene. (Both an English and a German version of his book are planned.)

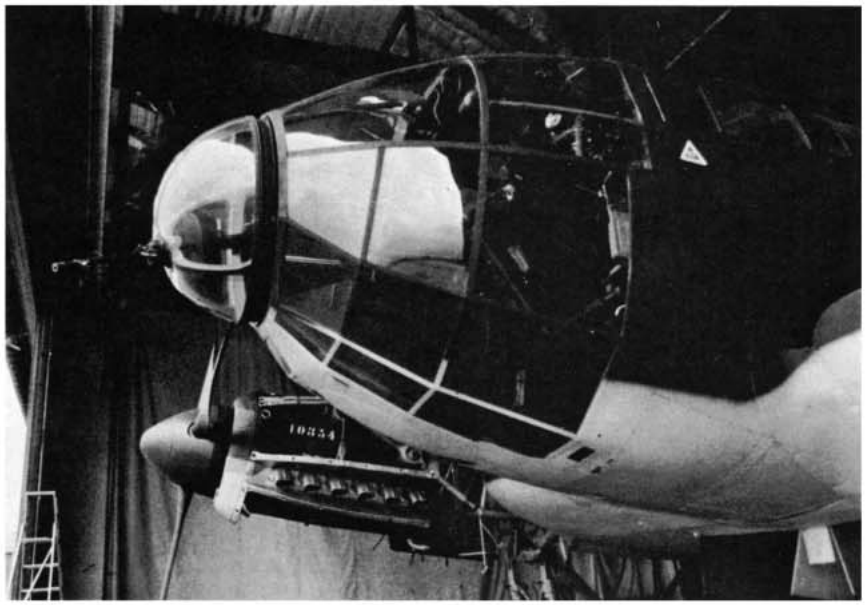
In 1940 the Germans had flown to Oslo in their bomber. This time they came more peacefully by sea and, after suffering the mild discomforts of trying to sleep in cabins too close to the engine room of the overnight ferry from Kiel, the three put on a brave face when they arrived in Oslo to be greeted by a cheery smile from Nilsen. And, for the first time, the two authors of this article also met.

We then embarked on a swift tour of the city and, as is always the case when ex-servicemen return to a place where they once served, the memories came flooding back as they were driven through the streets. Hoelscher spotted the place where an old destroyer had been berthed in 1940 and recalled that it was from this vessel they had always collected the crew's ration of cigarettes. Naturally, it did not take long before the guessing game started as to the exact location of their wartime billet. Before heading in the general direction of Gardermoen the crew was taken up to the famous Holmenkollen ski-jump, the point which provides an excellent panorama of the whole Norwegian capital. From here Fornebu, the airfield from which 5J+ CN commenced its last mission, could clearly be seen.

Pilot Gumbrecht lost little time in pointing out the hazards which had to be negotiated when trying to drop a He 111 down at a suitable point to avoid finishing up in the ditch. Stolz chipped in that at the height of the Norwegian campaign both ends of the runway were well-littered with the remains of many an unsuccessful landing. Luftwaffe General Erhard Milch, or so the story goes, was so sceptical of the high accident rate at Fornebu that he decided to investigate matters personally. Whilst landing the pilot of his immaculate Focke-Wulf Condor played the ace and, much to the amusement of the units operating there, promptly pranged the beast in the middle of the field repeating the same mistakes made by so many other unsuspecting Luftwaffe pilots. A rather shaken Milch then emerged and spontaneously declared the airfield closed!

During the relatively short journey to Gardermoen, a stop was made at the German War Cemetery. This was the first time since they parted company in the snow-covered wilderness of Digervarden that the crew were able to pay their respects to Willi Stock. The stillness of the interlude at the well-kept cemetery served as a reminder to the small group of people gathered there as to the real tragedy of war — the true meaning of which should never be forgotten.

By now, midday, the main event was drawing closer. At Oslo's main airport Erik Hagen from *Vi Menn* had collected the Fleet Air Arm contingent, without whose presence the picture would not have been complete. Finally, by two o'clock, the scene was set and Captain Moelmen could at last extend a welcoming hand to all the play actors — the men who meant so much to him and who were



Formerly marked 'Unbekannter' this is Willi Stock's joint grave in the German Soldatenfriedhof in Oslo.

Former Heinkel pilot, Richard Gumbrecht, prepares to clamber into his old aeroplane for the first time since 1940. Karl Stolz awaits his turn. Although the restoration programme had not been fully completed, it was felt the reunion should go ahead as planned.

so closely connected with the lonely Heinkel standing in the background. The picture of five airmen, three German and two British, standing happily united as if they were one crew will, for sure, remain in the memories of all those who witnessed the events on this Norwegian airfield for a very long time to come. As the commander of the base emphasized in his inaugural address, it was the fact that the enemies of yesteryear had been brought together as comrades forty years after attempting to annihilate each other which really gave the event its true significance. A matter of men and machines, but not the other way round.

It was a special privilege to see just how well Collett and Davies got along with their German opposite numbers. Left on their own, it was that irrepressible bond of mutual understanding found amongst all airmen, regardless of nationality, that did the rest. At this stage the Heinkel crew took the opportunity to show their newly won British friends the inside of their old mount. Both authors, having already experienced the hazards involved with moving up the sharp end, were more than just impressed by the degree of agility shown by the crew when boarding and moving along inside the fuselage. One could easily have believed that they were still on regular flying duties. Inside the Heinkel former navigator Collett was obviously impressed by the excellent view the Heinkel's fully glazed nose offered the navigator, but Davies seemed to have his doubts about Stolz's dorsal position, preferring the relative cosyness of the Skua.

When asked whether he could still fly the Heinkel, Gumbrecht thought it was still just about on the cards, but that was all and besides, 'What's this switch for anyway?' Back outside Collett informed him in a most reassuring way that the Skuas would never have got them if they had only been another thousand feet up. To this Gumbrecht just couldn't resist an ironic, 'Now you tell me!'

The time spent at Gardermoen ended rather fittingly with all concerned pushing the Heinkel back into the hangar which had been its abode since leaving the mountains in 1976. Strangely enough even the hangar itself deserves a mention. Beneath its peeling plaster the familiar Gothic lettering used by the German Wehrmacht could easily be made out. Quite clearly the hangar was not harbouring a He 111 for the first time.

This was not the end of the story. As the crew left Gardermoen and their old aircraft, there were still many more miles to be covered. The next part of the programme was a return to some of the locations which had featured in the events of April 26, 1940. Strengthened by a good evening meal in Oslo, the party boarded a night train for Aandalsnes.

Early next morning the train pulled into that very same railway station they had bombed and there was another Norwegian waiting for them. It was the station-master, Joergen Strandli, who had a very special reason to remember Hoelscher's crew. That fateful day in 1940 he had fled for his life to escape the very bombs Guenther Hoelscher had dropped. It was a unique meeting between a bomber crew and their victim, a meeting which could have proved very embarrassing, but it turned out well and Strandli said he had no hard feelings towards the Germans. 'I don't blame you personally for what you did', he told them, 'You had a job to do, just like we had. But I have never understood the mentality of your rulers and I am glad Germany today is one of Europe's democracies. And guess if I am glad you missed me in 1940!' The Germans could only reply that so were they and it was very obvious that they really meant it.

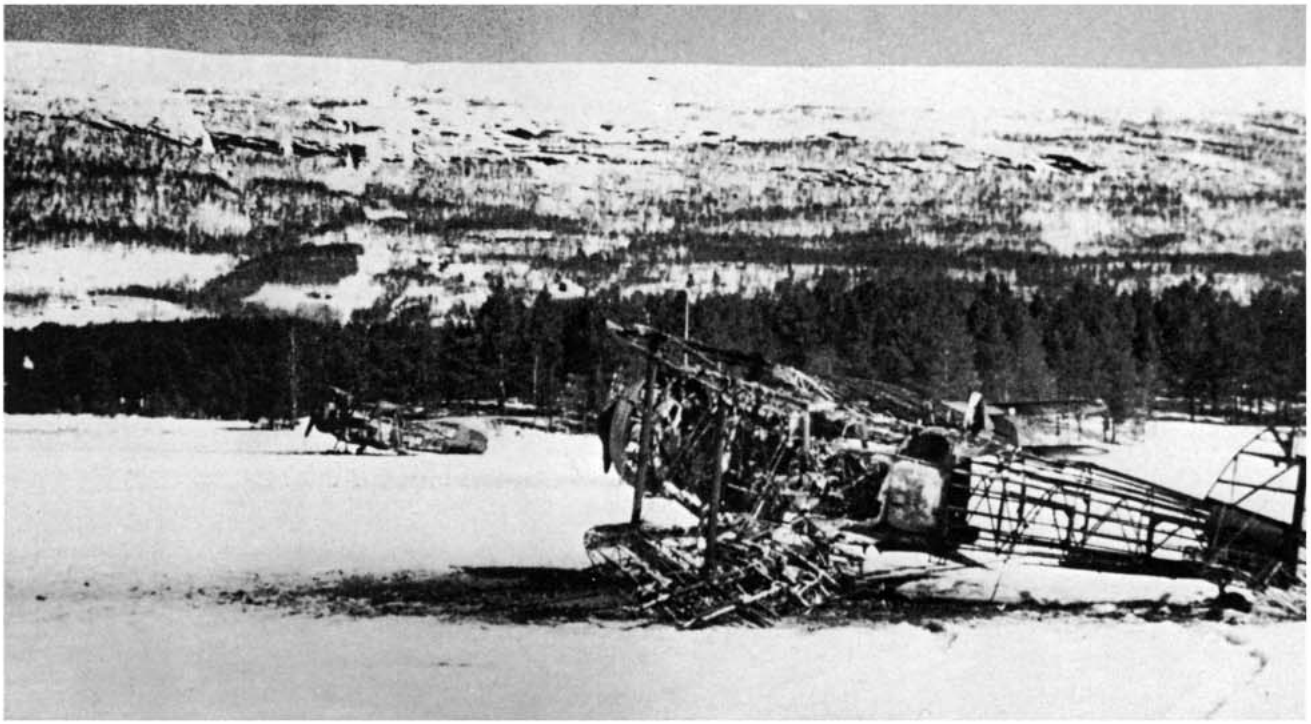
Above: **The great reunion. L-R Guenther Hoelscher, John Collett, Richard Gumbrecht, Reg Davies and Karl Stolz.** *Right:* **Another meeting of a different sort took place at Aandalsnes when Joergen Strandli, the station master on the receiving end of the Heinkel's bombs in 1940, came face to face with his former adversary.**

The crash site

With noon having passed it was time for the one-time aviators to take to the air again, this time in the comfort of a modern helicopter. The weather was not very good, with low clouds and a strong cross-wind. Up to the last moment it was uncertain whether the helicopter could get up to the point in the mountains where it had all more or less begun — 5J+ CN's crash site. However, in two lifts, struggling against the wind, the Norwegian pilot skilfully transported the party up.

What met us was a windswept wilderness of stone, the darkened sky and rain doing nothing to enhance the bleakness. Here, exactly in the middle of where the Heinkel had rested for so many years, stood a solitary wooden cross, erected by Norwegians to the memory of Willi Stock. This was perhaps the most moving moment of all and we others felt almost like intruders. The best we could do was leave Hoelscher, Gumbrecht and Stolz alone for a few minutes. What they thought we will never know . . . we can only guess. Soon they pulled themselves together again and even managed a forced smile at one of Stolz's even more forced jokes. The ring was closed. This *was* the end of the journey.

We then set off on foot down the mountain retracing, for part of the way, the same path followed by 5J+ CN's crew. It was a hard slog but, unlike 1940, there was no uncertainty for the future and we were not surrounded by enemies. All had become firm friends and there was a magnificent reindeer stew awaiting us at Moelmen's hut in the valley.



Norwegian Postscript

The aftermath of a battle. Burned-out shells of Gladiator fighters of No. 263 Squadron, RAF, litter the ice of Lake Lesjaskogvatn in 1940. When the ice melted, the aircraft sank.

An ironic postscript to the story of Heinkel 5J+CN came on January 25, 1980 with the unveiling in Norway of a restored Gladiator from No. 263 Squadron — one of those bombed by Hoelscher's crew in 1940.

On April 24, 1940, in order to support the Allied fight against the rapidly advancing German forces in southern Norway, eighteen Gloster Gladiator fighters of No. 263 Squadron, Royal Air Force, landed on the ice-covered lake Lesjaskogsvatn, not far from Aandalsnes, at about 6.00 p.m.

The severe cold during the night made it difficult to start the engines next morning and, right from first light, they were subjected to continuous attacks by the Luftwaffe. Those Gladiators which got into the air shot down at least six German bombers and damaged several more but they were hopelessly outnumbered and, by the end of the day, only four serviceable aircraft remained. These were all transferred to a new base, Setnesmoen nearer to Aandalsnes. Back at the frozen lake lay the wrecks of the remaining fourteen Gladiators and three Norwegian Army Air Force Fokker CVs.

On June 9 Norway capitulated and later the Germans sold the wrecks to a Norwegian scrap-merchant. An old lay-preacher named Ludvig Hope bought one of them from him and, with the aid of six other men, he recovered N5641 from a depth of five metres on August 13, 1940. The aircraft was then transported to his country cottage near the lake where he built a shed around it and also did some primitive recovery work.

Since the end of war, the old preacher's descendants have received many offers for the aircraft, not least from British diving expeditions which have uncovered remains of other Gladiators for the RAF Museum and RAF Germany. Fortunately for the Norwegians, all such offers were refused. In 1973, the Norwegian Aviation Historical Society began to take an interest in the aircraft and raised the matter with the Royal Norwegian Air Force. Four years later negotiations with the owners were successfully completed and the Gladiator bought by the newly established Armed Forces Museum in Oslo.

In September that year it was collected by a team from the Air Force and brought to Rygge Air Base south of Oslo. There it has been painstakingly restored in its original colours and provided a striking contrast to its modern counterpart when, on January 25, 1980, it was put on public view for the first time during the official handing-over of Norway's first General Dynamics F-16 fighter.

The Gladiator, restored in the colour scheme of No. 263 Squadron in 1940, in the Armed Forces Museum, Oslo.

PACIFIC WAR RECOVERY KAWANISHI SHIDEN-KAI

BY T. MURASHIMA

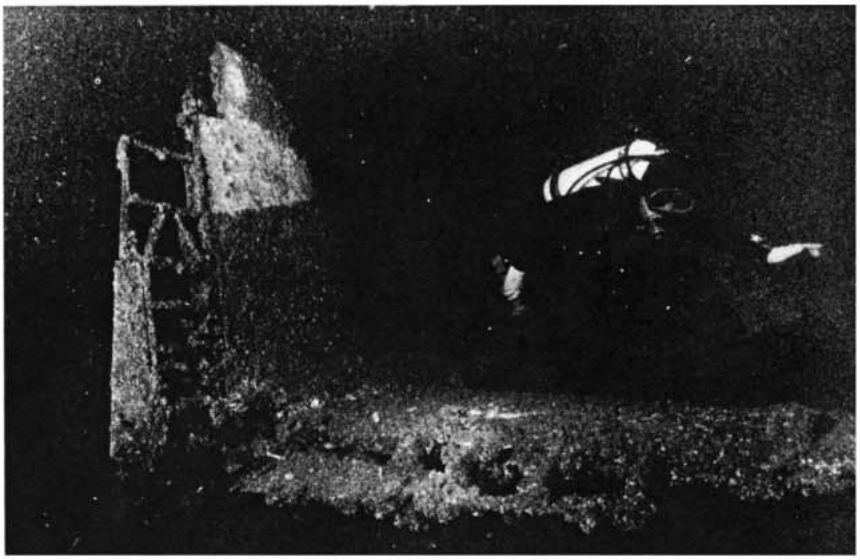
On November 15, 1978, in Hido bay off the town of Shirobe in southern Nanwa Gun, Japan, a diver from the Shirobe Marine Club, while searching for an anchor lost by a fishing boat, discovered an aeroplane lying some 130 feet down on the sea bed. Four weeks later the Asahi Broadcasting Company asked an underwater cameraman, Tadashi Murashima, to undertake a photographic survey of the plane. This is his story.

It was December 15 when I arrived on the spot. Hido Bay itself is taken up by a fish farm and, about 200 metres from the shore, a buoy marked the location of the wreckage. My assistant and I set out with an underwater light generator and, having prepared a reserve tank for use at reduced pressure, commenced the dive keeping close by the buoy rope. Although these waters are known as a breeding ground for fish, the winter seas are pretty clear. However, at a depth of thirty metres, as might be expected, the waters grew dim. Training our photographic lamp on the sea-bed, when we switched on the fuselage of the aircraft became visible. It was the shape of a Kawanishi Shiden-kai fighter plane of the Imperial Japanese Navy with the tapering end of the left wing buried in the sand and the forward section of the aircraft facing south-east.

Barnacles encrusted the entire surface of the fuselage. Probably as a result of the shock the propellers had suffered when hitting the water, some thirty centimetres at the end of each had been bent at right angles to the rest of the blade. The engine cover was ripped off in three places. Both wings had been damaged where they joined the main body of the aircraft; likewise the left tailplane was bent where it was attached to the rest of the machine. Holes which appeared to have been caused by gunfire could be seen all over the fuselage. Also, having been submerged for so long, the wing flaps and the vertical rudder of the tailplane had been reduced to a mere skeletons. The barrels of the four 20mm cannons mounted in the wings were still clearly visible.

When we had finished filming, bearing in mind the diving time available to us, we examined the cockpit thoroughly for evidence of human remains but found only a pair of flying boots and a helmet.

The Shiden-kai (Violet Lightning) discovered by chance thirty-three years after the end of the war was one of 428 such fighters produced between August 1944 and August 1945. It was unique among the combat land planes of the second war in that it was evolved from a floatplane design and, with its



Our author, Tadashi Murashima, examines the Shiden-kai believed to be one of the six aircraft lost on July 24, 1945 over the Bungo Straits — the channel between the two southern Japanese islands of Kyushu and Shikoku.

automatic combat flaps which gave it unbelievable manoeuvreability, it was undoubtedly one of the best single-seat fighter aircraft in the Pacific.

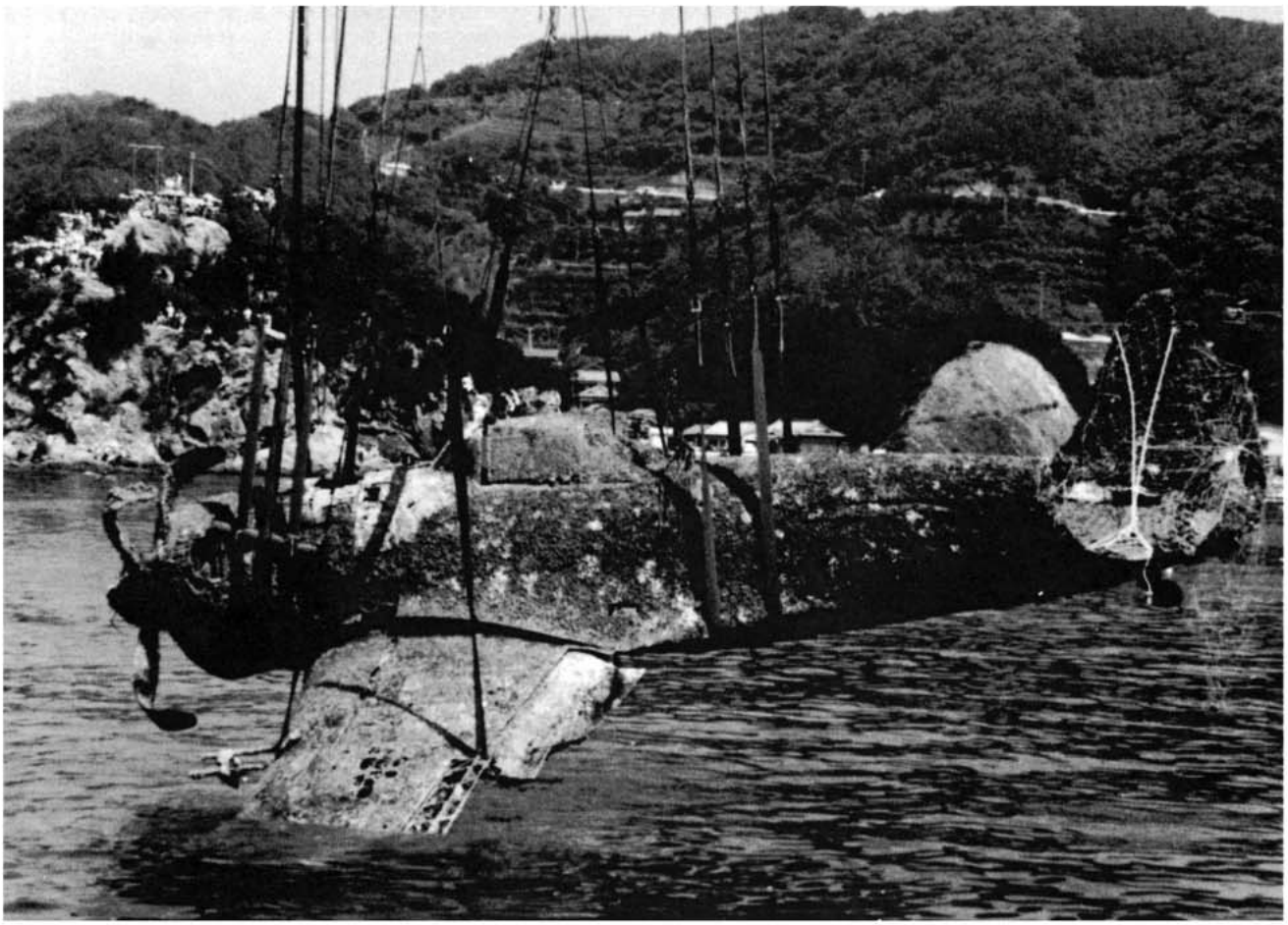
At the end of 1944, 120 Shiden-kais were allocated to Naval Air Group 343 (known as 'Genda's Circus' after its commander) at Matsuyama and were manned by crack pilots of the Japanese Navy Air Force charged with the defence of Honshu. On July 24, twenty-one aircraft took off to engage a superior force of American bombers over the Bungo straits. Six Japanese aircraft failed to return and the Shiden-kai discovered in Hido Bay is believed to be one of those aircraft.

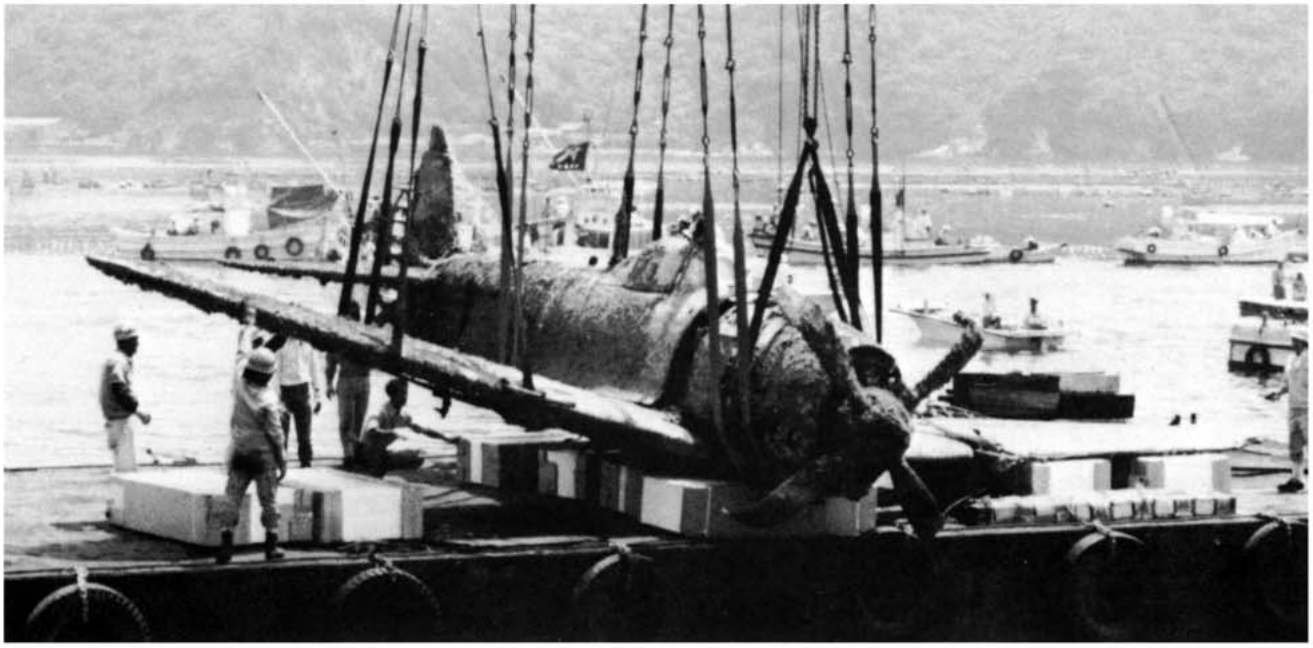
When the news of the discovery of this Shiden-kai was reported in the newspapers and on television in Japan, former squadron members, relatives and also people from the region in which the aeroplane had been found pressed for its recovery and preservation.

Eight months passed before the recovery operation could take place. Then, on July 14, 1979, a beautiful summer's day, the salvage operation in Hido Bay began. Relatives had been traced of the pilots of the six aircraft that were missing from the 1945 mission and they, together with the former commander of Kokutai 343, Mr. Minoru Genda, were present in Hido Bay as a large salvage crane was coupled to the aircraft by divers. The actual lift began at 9.00 a.m., very slowly — about one metre a minute — to avoid damage to the shell of the aircraft. Within an hour the fin and frame of the tail broke the surface and, as the body of the aircraft covered in shells rose from the water, the relatives clasped their hands together in supplication and offered flowers to the Shiden-kai which had emerged after thirty-four years. A small wreath was dedicated and cast on the water by the divers.

After the winching had been completed the Shiden-kai was lowered on to the deck of the salvage ship where an inspection was carried

Based at Matsuyama airfield on the north-western corner of Skikoku, the Shiden-kai came down some forty miles to the south-west in Hido Bay. The maru insignia was still just visible on the wing as she broke surface.





The Allied code-name for the Shiden-kai was 'George'.

out by the officer in charge and a representative of the Air/Sea Historical Department of the Defence Ministry. Although it was in a fair state of preservation, corrosion of every part of the body was well advanced and the instrument panel inside the cockpit had disintegrated so that the instruments themselves were strewn about the floor. In spite of a detailed search no effects whatsoever belonging to the former pilot were found. The muzzles of the Shiden-kai's wing-mounted cannons were red with rust and there were some 500 live cartridges in the magazines. (Its full quota would have been 900 rounds.) Bullet holes visible on the engine cover were probably the reason for the aircraft being ditched by the pilot.

The four propeller blades were bent backwards and from this it was deduced that the engine could only just have been turning over. (This could be established because when an aircraft comes in contact with the water under engine power, the propellers are normally bent forwards or break and fly off.) As for the flaps and undercarriage, they were retracted bearing out the belief that it was the pilot's express intention to make a landing on water. Only the left wing and tailplane had been damaged in the landing.

The big mystery was the fact that no evidence could be found of the pilot although when the aircraft was first discovered the canopy was closed. The most plausible explanation is thought to be that, having landed, the pilot extricated himself from the aircraft and made for the coast some 200 metres away and that, due to wounds or some other reason, his strength gave out on the way and he was lost at sea. We also tried to learn the identity of the aircraft from the number inscribed on the vertical tail fin but this part

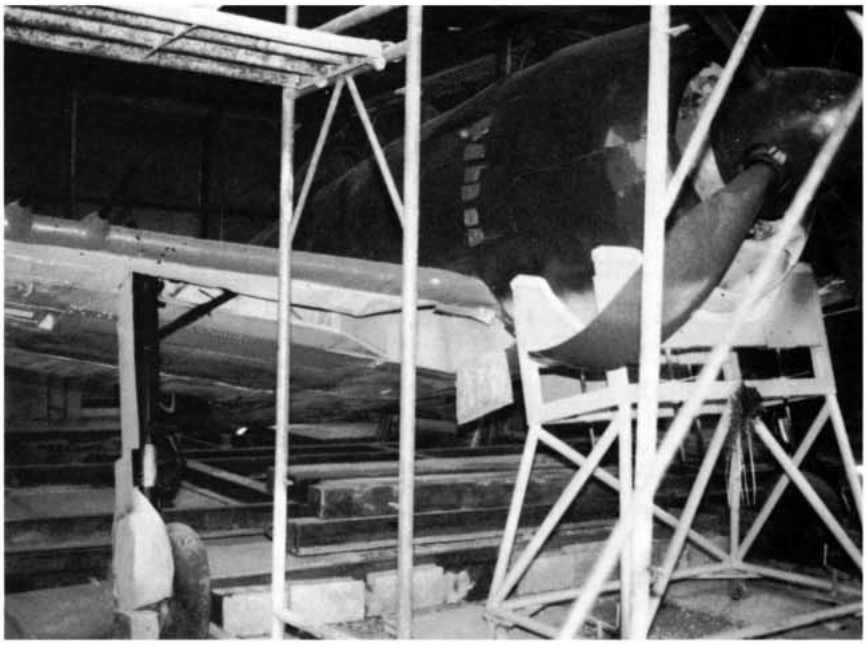
Commander Minoru Genda (in braided cap), one of the chief planners of the Pearl Harbour raid, watches the search for evidence of the pilot (Ehime Hikanshin).

had already reached a state where the lettering was indecipherable to the naked eye. By using infra-red photography we were able to make out something but it proved impossible to read.

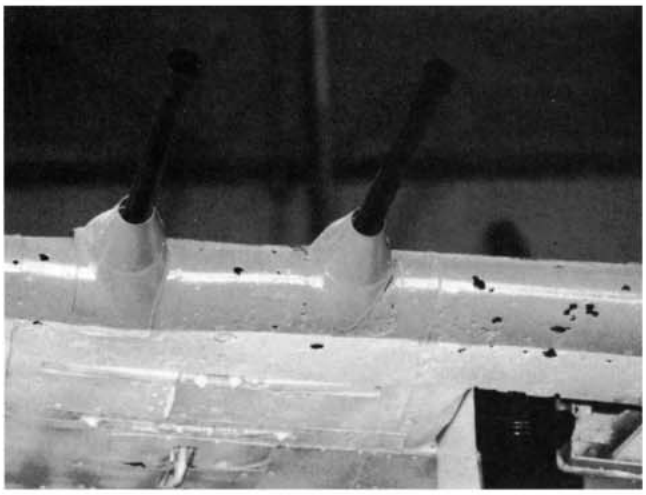
It may be just as well we are unable to identify the pilot. In posing the idea: what if we preserve the plane as it is — a monument on behalf of all those related to the six men who did not return that day — would this not best represent the feelings of those relatives? To my mind, this would be the best solution

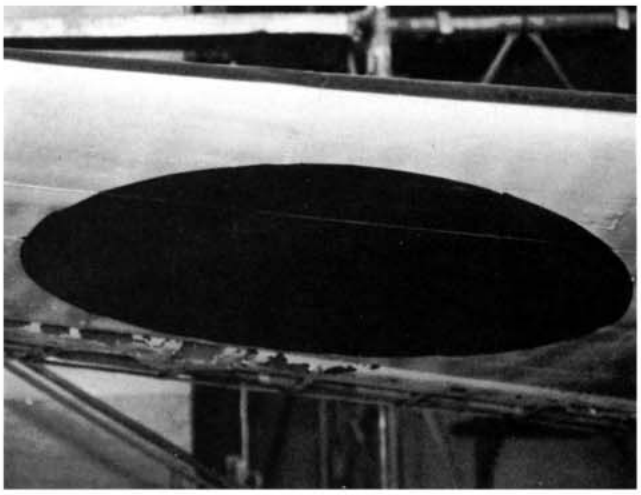
Today the complete wreckage of the salvaged Shiden-kai has been preserved in a park on the summit of Mount Umaze, by the town of Shirobe, directly overlooking Hido Bay. The salt and corrosion were treated by the Shinmeiwa Manufacturing Company Limited (formerly Kawanishi ko ku ki) which originally produced the Shiden-kai and, as well as applying anti-corrosive chemicals, their engineers reinforced the struts supporting the wings, the badly corroded engine cover and tailplane. Countless bullet holes were deliberately left in the vicinity of the cockpit and, although the throttle and rudder pedals were replaced, the pilot's seat was simply left as a frame. The undercarriage, which had been in the retracted position when the aircraft was recovered, was lowered but the propellers left as they were found.

With dark green paint coating the upperside and light grey on the belly, the Japanese red maru 'O' insignia outlined in white boldly emblazoned and her 20mm cannons trained at the sky, the Shiden-kai has now assumed a form which enables us to visualise her original appearance. The Ehime prefecture has now constructed a permanent museum for the preservation and display of the aircraft for all the time which will act as a testament to posterity of the history of the war in the Pacific.



The Shiden-kai was refurbished by the original makers of the plane although not to the extent of replacing corroded panels. The intention has been to preserve but not to repair — an interesting departure from a normal rebuild.





AFTER THE BATTLE
ENGLAND

TURNCOAT 109

BY ANDY SAUNDERS

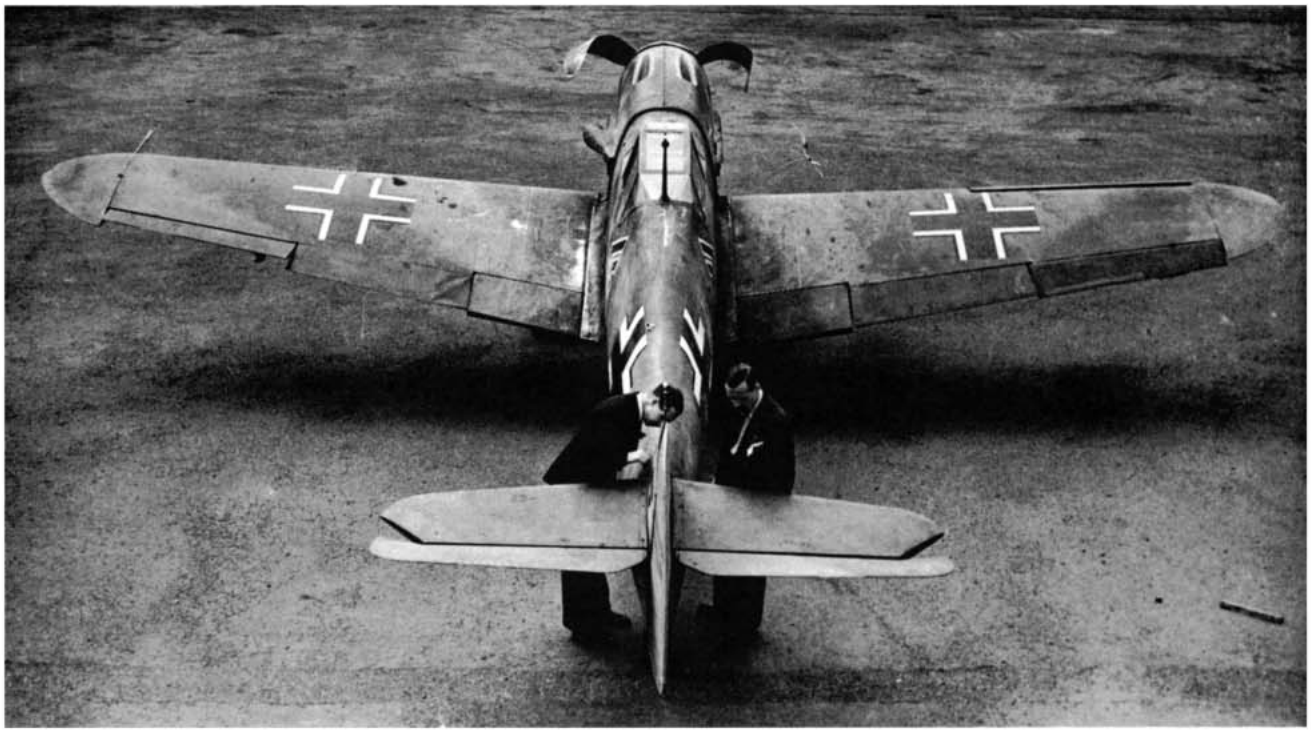
Possibly one of the most fascinating recovery operations on the wreck of a Second World War aircraft to be carried out in England in recent months was the salvage by enthusiasts of a Messerschmitt Bf 109F at Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire in August 1979. The story behind how it came to be there is not a little unusual.

Rolf Pingel's career as a fighter pilot in the Luftwaffe began in 1935 and terminated with his capture on July 10, 1941. At the time of his being taken prisoner he had claimed twenty-two victories, risen to the rank of Hauptmann, commanded I/JG 26 and was a holder of the coveted Ritterkreuz. His victories, however, had not been gained without cost, for on September 28, 1940, just fourteen days after the award of the Knight's Cross, he was shot down into the sea five miles south-east of Dover by Sergeant J. M. Beard, flying a Hurricane of No. 249 Squadron. Fortunately for him, he was rescued and returned to his unit but the following year, whilst in the same area, and flying a brand new 109F on July 10, he was forced to crash-land at St. Margaret's Bay, Kent. Rolf Pingel takes up his own story:

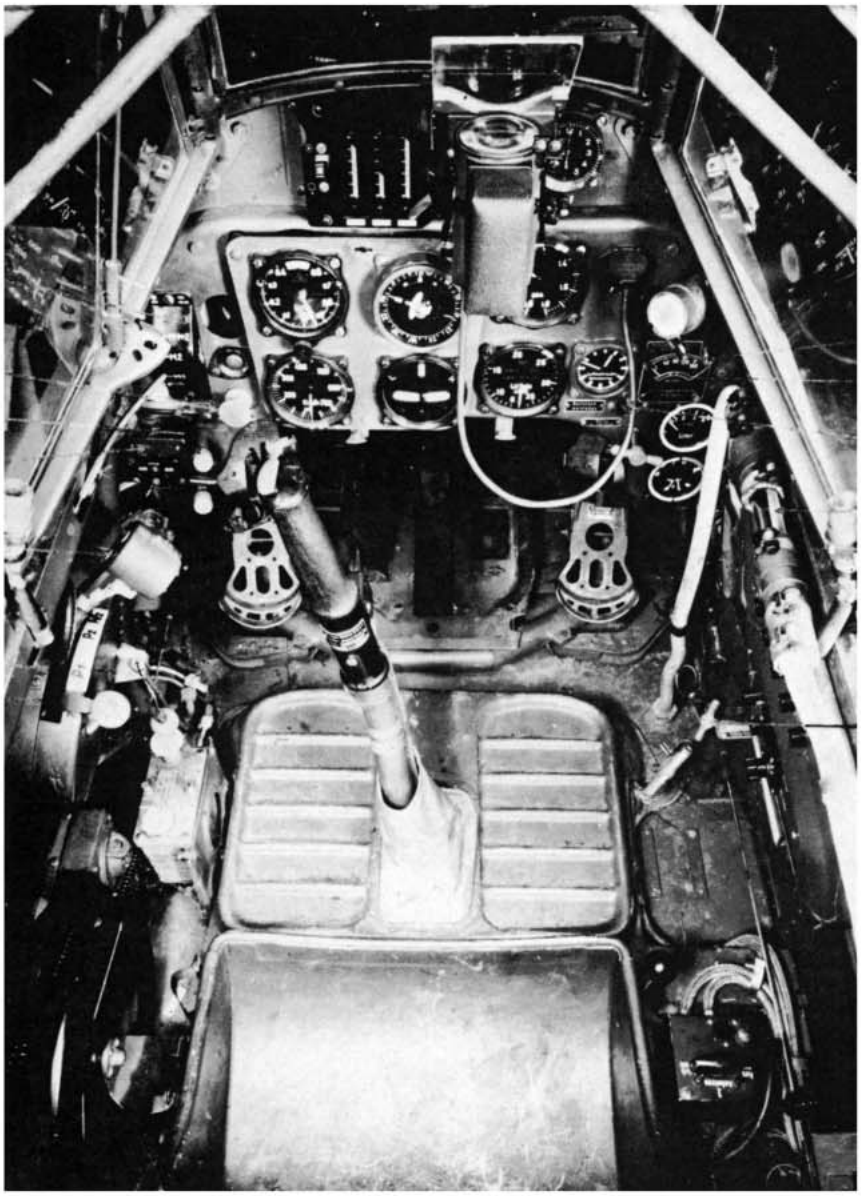
'On this day there was an attack by some four-engined bombers (in fact, Stirlings). I followed one of these big planes on its way back to England, hoping for a chance to attack. Whether I was hit by machine gun fire from the bombers or by an English fighter plane I don't know. Maybe both. My engine then stopped working correctly and the oil and water temperatures became very hot. I tried to escape close to the ground as I had done many times before. Close to Dover there were many English planes. I was still close to the ground when the engine nearly stopped. There was no chance of baling out so I made a pancake landing.'

Coming to rest in a cornfield, Pingel was about to set fire to his aeroplane but was

Above: **The RAF recover their prize from a field at St. Margaret's Bay, Kent (Fox) and prepare the machine for transportation to Farnborough** *(below)* **(IWM).**



Left: **Hauptmann Rolf Pingel, commander of I/JG26. His was the first Messerschmitt Bf 109F to be captured by the British and it was minutely examined by experts from the Ministry of Aircraft Production at the Royal Aircraft Establishment. Their photographs were released to the press just thirteen days after Pingel crashed (IWM).**



The cockpit was photographed at the RAE for an intelligence report on the new model. The aircraft was repainted, given the RAF serial ES906, and flown at Farnborough on September 19 before being delivered to Duxford on Otober 11 to be evaluated against the Spitfire by the Air Fighting Development Unit.

dissuaded from doing so by a burst of machine gun fire above his head from a local army detachment. Consequently, the aircraft was captured almost intact — the first of its kind to fall into British hands.

The prize was carefully dismantled and transported to RAE Farnborough for evaluation, where it was also repainted in RAF markings of dark green/dark earth with a yellow undersurface and given the RAF serial number ES906. From there it was transferred to the Air Fighting Development Unit at Duxford and it was from here, on October 20, 1941, that it crashed.

Whilst engaged in comparative speed tests with a Spitfire, and diving over the drome at 50 degrees, the angle of dive steepened into the vertical and the aircraft crashed into the nearby village of Fowlmere, killing its Polish pilot, Flying Officer Marian Skalski. Skalski was found to have been overcome by carbon monoxide fumes, thirty per cent being traced in his blood at the autopsy. A long way from his native land, he was laid to rest in nearby Whittlesford Churchyard at a service on October 24, 1941 officiated by Stefan Ostaniewicz, a Polish Chaplain.

During the early 1970s, the spot where the

Flying Officer Marian Skalski, the Polish pilot who died in the aircraft on October 20, 1941. He had just two hours flying time on the Bf 109.

ES906 at Duxford sometime between October 11 and 20, 1941 (Alister Raby).

aircraft crashed, in marshy waste land off Green Lane, was investigated and, indeed, excavated by Tony Graves and John Tickner of the London Air Museum. Little was found, however, although it became obvious during a visit to the site by Steve Vizard and myself in 1979 that the exact point of impact had been missed during the first excavation and that most of the aircraft probably still remained buried. Permission for a 're-dig' was duly obtained and, on August 24, 1979, a team of enthusiasts including Steve Vizard, John Tickner, myself and representatives of many of the major southern-based aircraft recovery groups arrived on the site with a JCB excavator.

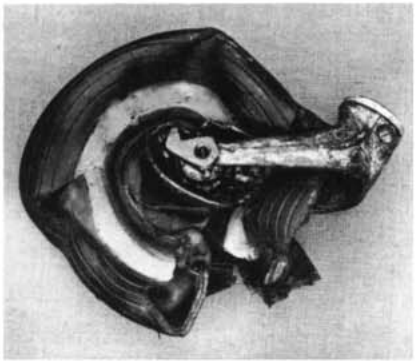
The dig proved successful right from the start with the uncovering of the tailwheel and a section of the fuselage bearing RAF camouflage with part of the serial ES906. Then the complete tailplane and tailfin assembly came to light. This was the most remarkable find — still being relatively intact and bearing traces of the red-white-blue fin flash under which could be seen traces of the Swastika. Also, still in place on the fin, was a large Messerschmitt maker's plate, clearly visible in one of the wartime photographs taken at Farnborough. Continuing down to a depth of about twelve feet, other treasures unearthed were a shredded parachute and 'D' ring, a master compass, three oxygen bottles, both undercarriage legs and one tyre, armour plating, prop hub and three blades along with the engine and many other items. Several canvas bags of lead shot were found, presumably added to compensate for the removal of the armament. An ironic find was a small brass plate from the repaired radiator bearing the stamp of the Royal Aircraft Establishment!

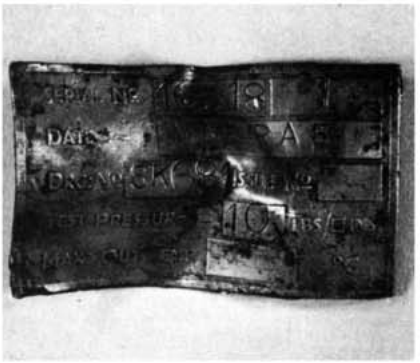
Without doubt this was a fascinating and worthwhile recovery, for not only was the aircraft a very rare type but its history is unique.

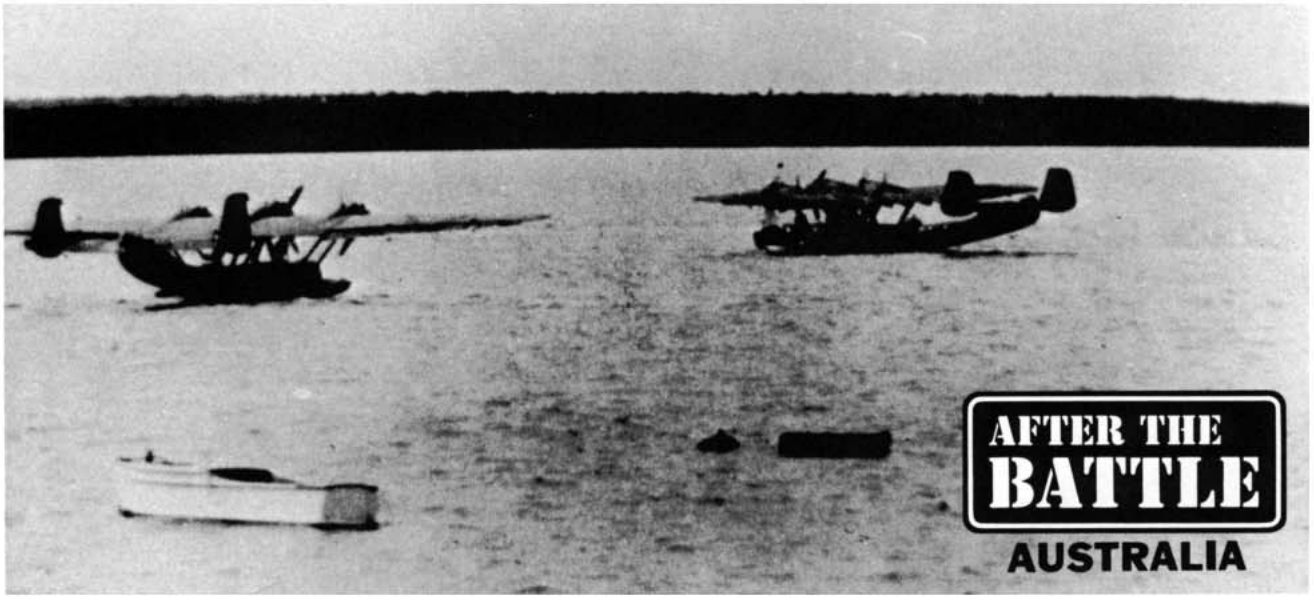
The crash site at Green Lane, Fowlmere on August 24, 1979. Andy Saunders (left) and Steve Vizard (right) with one of the prop blades still connected to the hub. A rather grim-faced Peter Cornwell, author of a major part of our forthcoming book 'The Battle of Britain — Then and Now' looks on (Cambridge Evening News).

Above: **The most probable explanation of how the tailplane (displayed by Steve Vizard and Andy Saunders) was recovered is that it was buried in the crater by the RAF clearance team in 1941. Usually such items at the rear of an aircraft are not carried into the ground of their own accord.**

Above: **The fin still bore the Messerschmitt maker's plate visible in the picture taken shortly after its capture in 1941, giving the Werk Nummer 889 (IWM).** *Below left:* **The same tailwheel with its Continental whitewall tyre.** *Centre:* **Radio plate cleary stamped 109F.** *Right:* **A unique find on a German aeroplane — the British repair plate from the radiator.**







AIR-RAID ON BROOME

BY STAN GADJA

On February 28, 1942, Japanese forces began landings on the northern coast of Java. The Japanese, with unchallenged air superiority, quickly overcame the Dutch, American and British defenders and, as hope of any effective Allied resistance failed, so the port of Broome on the north-western coast of Australia, some eight hundred miles to the south, attained an unexpected importance. For those members of the Allied forces for whom air transport could be provided, the flying boat base at Broome provided a staging post for the evacuation from the south coast of Java. The Japanese command was not slow in recognising the importance of the base and, at about 3.00 p.m. on March 2, a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft made three circuits over Broome at about 9,000 feet.

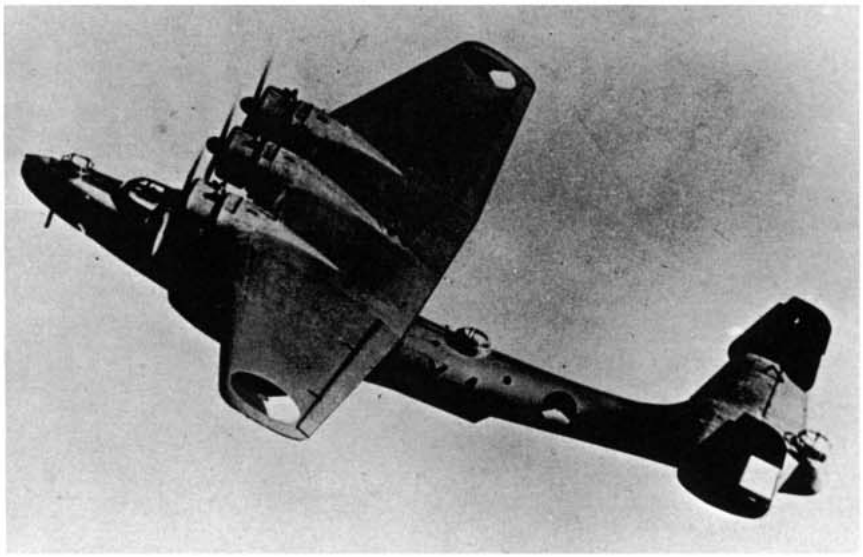
At that time there were just three flying boats moored in the harbour but, before dusk, four more arrived with a further nine during the night. The harbour could only accomodate three aircraft at a time so the others were obliged to anchor outside which meant that they became stranded on the sea-bed when the tide went out. By morning, therefore, there were a mixture of Short Empire flying boats, Dutch Dornier Do 24s and British, American and Dutch Consolidated Catalinas at anchor — a total of fifteen aircraft altogether. (One aircraft had left shortly after dawn.) The enemy reconnaissance the previous day obviously had an omnious significance but the implicit warning of an imminent raid was not acted upon.

At 9.20 a.m. Japanese fighters swept in over the harbour in a low-level surprise attack. The raiding force comprised nine Zeros, three of which circled overhead as cover while the others in line ahead formation came in at about 500 feet.

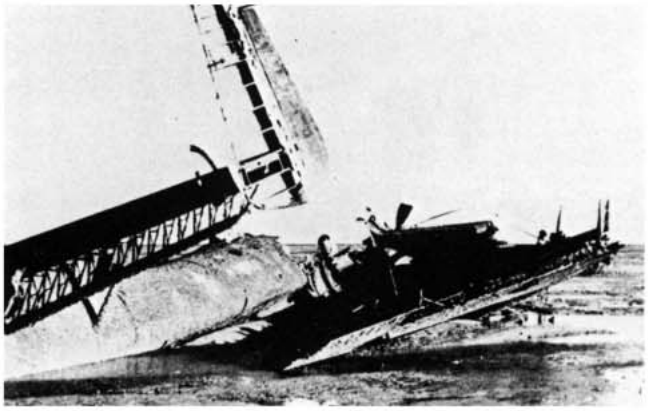
The first indication of the raid was a burst of gunfire aimed at a Royal Australian Air Force Empire flying boat. The captain, Flight Lieutenant Caldwell, and the co-pilot were ashore at the time while the rest of the crew were in the spar compartment. As explosive bullets tore through their aircraft, Corporal Ireland rushed to the flight deck, released the rubber dinghy and jumped into the sea. The other crew members dived overboard and joined Ireland who had succeeded in inflating the dinghy and all escaped from the flying boat without injury just as it burst into flames. By this time other flying boats were either blazing at their moorings or sinking. The RAAF crew went to the aid of survivors from one of the Dutch aircraft and eventually reached the beach with thirteen in their dinghy, the normal capacity of which was five.

As the Zeros attacked, Captain H. Mathieson, captain of the refuelling lighter *Nicol Bay*, had just begun to refuel a Qantas flying boat *Corinna* whose commander, Captain Ambrose, was ashore making final flight arrangements. Mathieson immediately cut the lighter free and pushed off and, though this was only the second flying boat to be attacked, his vessel, with 180 drums of petrol on board was not hit. His subsequent efforts to rescue survivors from the sea were not welcomed because of his dangerous cargo. Captain Brain, in charge of the shore-based staff, hearing the gunfire had run to the beach where he tried to drag a rowing boat into the water. Weak from attacks of fever, he failed until joined by Mr. Malcolm Miller a representative of the Qantas and BOAC General Agents in Singapore, who had been supervising flying boat operations from Malaya and later Java. Miller had been evacuated from Java by an American Fortress which had arrived that morning. Together he and Brain rowed out and rescued two Dutch men who were supporting a young woman who was in a state of collapse, then a man who was holding the rescued woman's baby, and finally a Dutch boy and four men who were trying to swim ashore. By this time all the flying boats had been attacked. By good chance the twenty-five passengers of the *Corinna* were still on the wharf. The Japanese pilots spared them and made no attempt to attack those who had leapt from the flying boats into the harbour. The crew of the Qantas flying boat, diving into the water, found an empty dinghy that had been cast loose from a lugger and rescued as many people from the sea as the boat would hold.

Seven planes were on the nearby aerodrome when the attack began, including two Flying Fortresses and two Liberators, one of which took off only to be shot down into the sea in flames. Of thirty-three men in the aircraft only one, an American Army sergeant, lived and he reached Broome after having been in the sea for more than thirty hours. A companion, the only other man to survive the



Now lying at the bottom of Broome Harbour in Western Australia, this is X-1, one of the five Dornier Do 24 flying boats lost in the air-raid on February 28, 1942 (M. Prime)



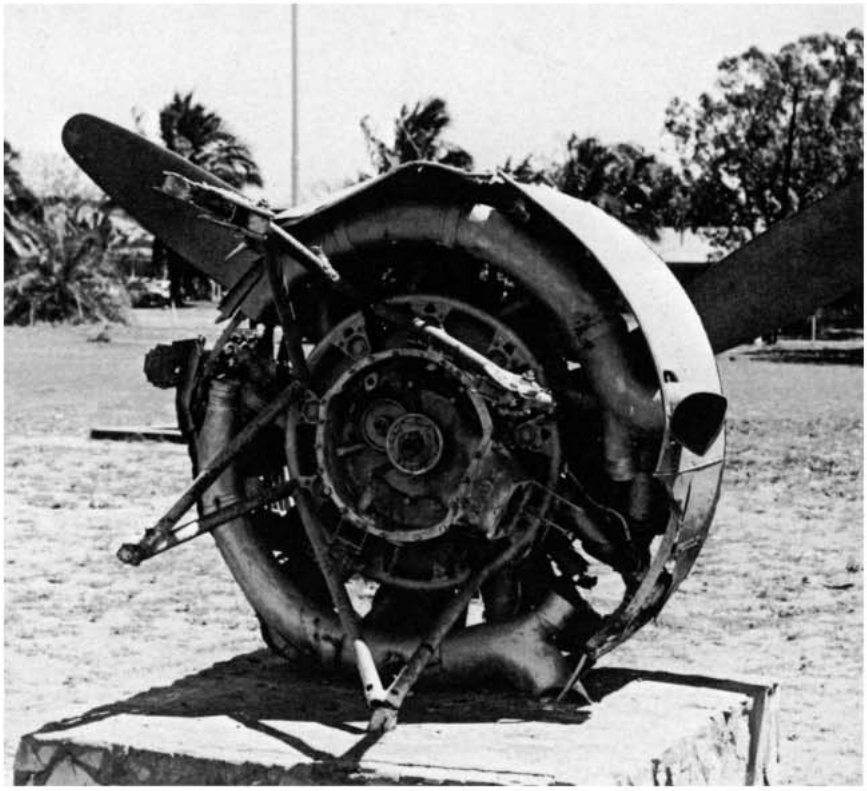
Left: **The wreck of one of the Dorniers after the raid (M. Prime).** *Above:* **Believed to be the same wreckage photographed by Stan Gadja in the mist.**

crash, reached the shore but died soon afterwards.

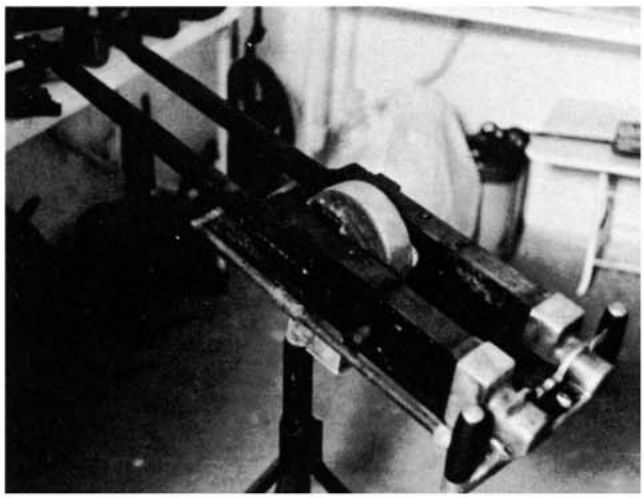
Only fifteen minutes after their first assault over the harbour, the raiders had wrecked every flying boat, swept the aerodrome and destroyed every aircraft on it, shot down the one land plane that took off, and set course for the return flight to their base. When about sixty miles north of Broome they met a Dutch DC-3, one of the last Allied aircraft to leave Java, which happened to be carrying a valuable consignment of diamonds. The Zeros promptly attacked it but the pilot managed to crash-land on the beach where a number of the passengers survived for several days before being rescued by the missionaries from Beagle Bay Mission.

Several of the flying boats shot back at the attackers with machine guns and a number of soldiers fired at the Zeros with service rifles. Six of the Japanese aircraft were found to have been hit when they returned to their base at Keopang and one was shot down, possibly by a Dutch gunner.

The exact number of casualties from the raid has never been determined. The evacuation of civilians from Java was conducted with inevitable haste and later, in the war cemetery at Broome, the graves of twenty-nine unidentified victims of the raid gave solemn proof of the absence of records listing the names of the passengers embarked in Java. It has been estimated that seventy people lost their lives, including those killed when the Liberator was shot down. Twenty-three aircraft were destroyed by the raiders. Of these fifteen were lost on the harbour (two Empire Flying boats, five Dutch Dorniers and four Dutch Catalinas, and two British and two American Catalinas); six were destroyed on the aerodrome (two Fortresses, one Liberator, one RAAF and one Dutch Hudson and one



A Wright Cyclone engine, from one of the Dutch flying boats, set up in Broome park by the local shire council in about 1974. All the magnesium parts had disappeared due to the reaction with salt water. The prop blade on the left points to the scene of destruction. Note the bullet holes in cowling at the top (M. Prime).



Above: **Twin Brownings salvaged by the Garston brothers in 1975 and now displayed in the local museum.** *Right:* **Another of the engines set up outside Kennedy's General Store.**

Dutch DC-3); and two aircraft were shot down (one Liberator and one DC-3).

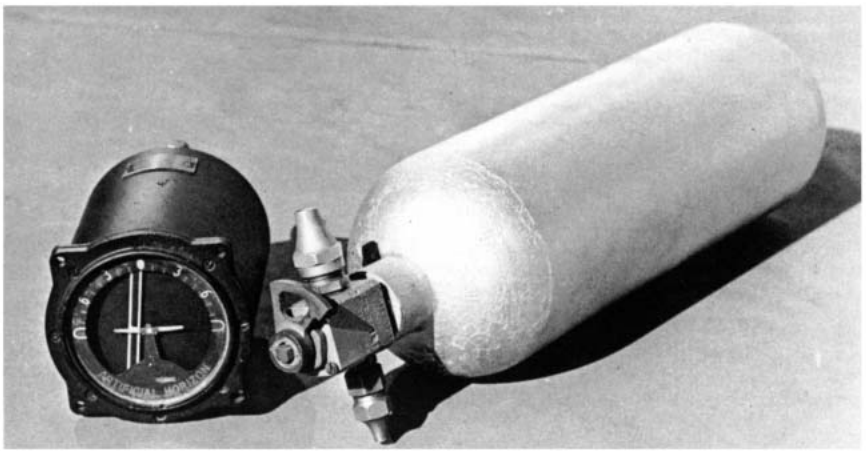
Thirty-six years later a group of Australian enthusiasts decided to visit Broome to seek out any evidence of the attack. This is the report of their visit by Stan Gajda.

On the evening of September 15, 1978, Michael Savory, Robert Jury and myself, left Lancelin in Western Australia on a 1,350-mile expedition by four-wheel-drive vehicle to the far north of Western Australia to find and photograph remaining war relics, particularly those pertaining to the Japanese air-raids. The trip had been timed to coincide with the annual king tides which were to occur at Broome from September 18-21, peaking on the 20th which meant we would have the lowest tide levels of the year.

We arrived at Broome on the morning of September 17 and, after settling in at a friend's place in Broome, set off out across the tidal flats during the late afternoon low tide. With the help of local tide movement charts and setting off from the beach about twenty minutes before minimum low tide, we reached the first aircraft wreck at minimum low water. This aircraft is more than a mile from shore and is a Catalina of unknown identity. It lies on an even keel and signs of fire are still evident. Some perspex still remains in the cockpit windows and both pilot's seats are still in position. The interior of the cabin is silted up to the level of the seats. The instruments were stripped out long ago but the front turret is complete except for the machine gun. The starboard wing is completely missing, the outboard end is caved in and drooping from the results of the fire with the stumps of the starboard wing struts also melted over but still attached to the fuselage. The roof of the fuselage aft of the cockpit is missing but investigation revealed a jumble of equipment still inside buried in the mud. The wing now lies across the mid-section of the fuselage with the port motor still in position and the starboard motor lying propeller down nearby. The tail section is detached completely and lies a few yards behind the main wreck. During our first walk out, this was the only wreck that could be reached although seven other wrecks were visible protruding from the water further out.

Over the following three days we made three more trips out to the plane wrecks with the lowest tide of the year on the morning of the 20th, enabling us to reach five more wrecks. Of these, one was just an unrecognisable pile of wreckage almost covered with mud and the

One of the eight Catalinas destroyed from which Stan Gadja retrieved an artificial horizon and oxygen bottle which were restored to working order.



JAPANESE AIRCRAFT TAKING PART IN BROOME RAID

Type of Aircraft	Formation No. Sqdn. No.	Craft No.	Rank, Names of Crew		Damage
Zero Fighters A6M2	1	1	Lieutenant	Zenjiro Miyano	Bulletholes x 6
		2*	3rd Air Sergeant	Takashi Kurano	Bulletholes x 2
		3*	1st Air Private	Zempei Matsumoto	Nil
	2	1**	Chief Air Sergeant	Osamu Kudo	Missing — death confirmed
		2	1st Air Sergeant	Masaki Okazaki	Bulletholes x 2 Slight injury
		3	2nd Air Sergeant	Susumu Matsumoto	Bulletholes x 3
	3	1	1st Air Sergeant	Juzo Okamoto	Bulletholes x 2
		2	2nd Air Sergeant	Yoshio Hashiguchi	Bullethole x 1
		3	1st Air Private	Yasuo Matsumoto	Landed in sea. Rescued after the craft sunk

Also one reconnaissance — Land Type C5M2 — Pilot 1st Air Sergeant Akira Hayashi with observer 1st Air Private Shinobu Nagasawa

* Detected DC-3. Attacked and caused landing on the beach
** Shot down PBY x 2, B-24 x 1

others were identified as one Catalina and three Dornier Do 24 three-engined flying boats. One of these Dorniers is quite recognisable with the fuselage intact except for fire damage in the mid-section. Turret ring gears fore and aft are still in place together with assorted other equipment. Some access panels still swing easily on their hinges even though everything is heavily encrusted with marine growth. The entire wing together with engines lies detached only a few yards away. On this morning, the tide movement was thirty-two feet and it was the only time this wreck could be reached on foot and even then we had to cross numerous swiftly flowing tidal creeks to reach it and we could only spend about ten minutes there because of the rapid tidal turn around.

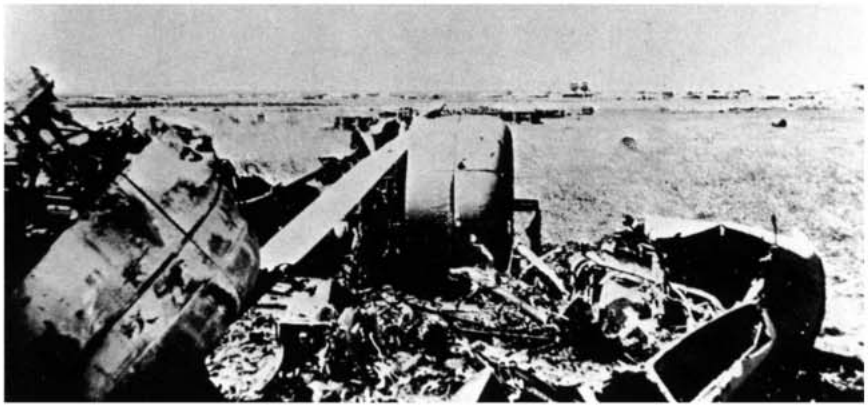
We had a little bad luck that day because a thick fog rolled in and made photography almost impossible. When the king tides were over I had been able to photograph most of the visible wrecks and, in the first Catalina, succeeded in finding a radio set, a fire extinguisher and the artificial horizon instrument. The radio completely fell apart but the other two items have been restored back to remarkable condition which is surprising considering thirty-six years immersion in the sea.

We spent some time searching for relics on land and found a large section of Hudson rear fuselage lying in a bush near the airfield with the remains of the air force roundel still visible on the starboard side. Investigation has revealed that no other Hudsons were lost at Broome at any time so it is concluded that these remains must have been A16-119, RAAF, destroyed by the Japanese on Broome airfield.

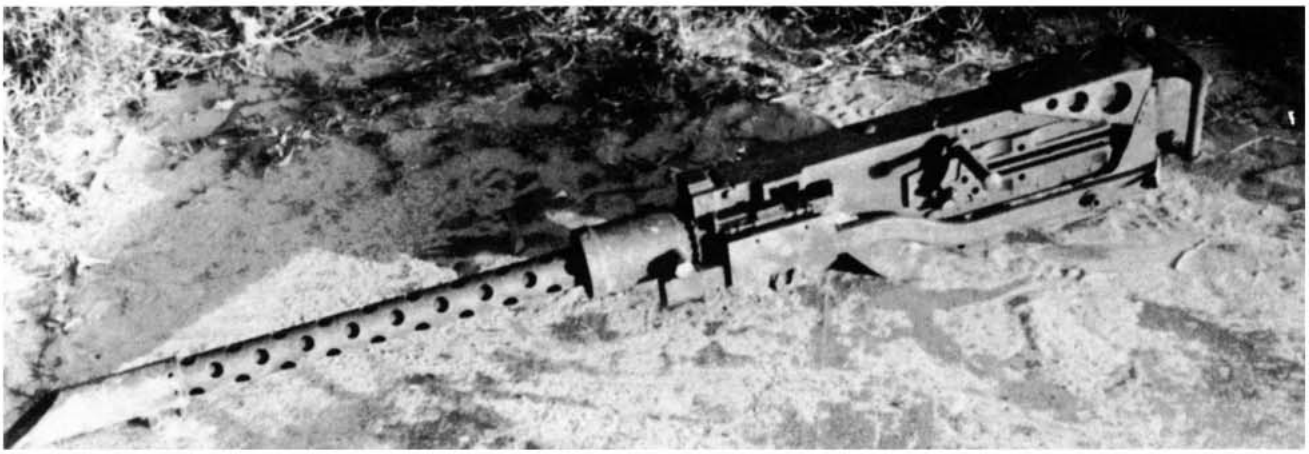
Further searching uncovered one of the main undercarts of a B-17 Flying Fortress and this must have belonged to one of the B-17s destroyed on the airfield by the Japanese.

Investigations in and around Broome

Above: **Broome airfield 1978. A Bristol Freighter of the Royal New Zealand Air Force stands where Allied aircraft once burned.** *Below:* **This was the scene of carnage in the aftermath of the surprise attack in 1942.**



Now in a private collection, this 50-calibre Browning is most probably a B-17 port-side waist gun.



Part of the undercarriage from one of the B-17s, found near the airstrip. The engine is now in Perth in the Western Australian Aviation Historical Group's HQ.

uncovered a near mint .50-calibre Browning machine gun in private hands that was found in the bush near Broome recently and two other .50s at the Christian Brother's College which had been found by aboriginal children and will be eventually displayed as relics in the school's museum.

The Broome District Museum, which is housed in the old gaol, has a pair of .303 Brownings on display which were salvaged from one of the flying boat wrecks in the harbour. These guns have been restored into working condition and are very well preserved. Other relics of the raid to be found around Broome are two engines salvaged from Dornier aircraft, one on display outside Kennedy's General Store and the other made into a memorial in the town park with one of the propeller blades pointing to the scene of the raid out in the bay. Both engines bear bullet holes from the attacking aircraft. A further engine which was found near the airstrip has been sent to Perth and is now at the Western Australian Aviation Historical Group's headquarters. This engine has been identified as being from a B-17 and, since it is badly damaged by fire, it probably belonged to one of those destroyed on the airfield.

We concluded that our visit to Broome had been a success and that the number of relics still lying around is due to Broome's isolated position since the only access road from the south is over more than 300 miles of dirt road, which is often impassable due to rain. When the road is fully sealed in the near future, many important relics of this historical raid will disappear.

ALLIED AIRCRAFT LOSSES IN THE BROOME RAID

Aircraft Type	*Serial or Regn.*	*Operator*
LANDPLANES		
B-17E Fortress	41-2448	USAAF
B-17E Fortress	41-2454	USAAF
B-24 Liberator		USAAF
B-24 Liberator		USAAF
Hudson	A16-119	RAAF
Lodestar	LT 9-18	NEIAF
DC-3	PK-ALO	KNILM
DC-3	PK-AFV	KNILM
FLYING BOATS		
Short Empire	A18-10	RAAF
Short Empire	G-AEUC	Qantas
PBY Catalina	Y-59	Dutch Navy
PBY Catalina	Y-60	Dutch Navy
PBY Catalina	Y-67	Dutch Navy
PBY Catalina	Y-70	Dutch Navy
PBY Catalina		US Navy
PBY Catalina		US Navy
PBY Catalina		RAF
PBY Catalina		RAF
Dornier Do 24	X-1	Dutch Navy
Dornier Do 24	X-3	Dutch Navy
Dornier Do 24	X-20	Dutch Navy
Dornier Do 24	X-23	Dutch Navy
Dornier Do 24	X-28	Dutch Navy

Above: **Hudson A16-119 found in the scrub near the airfield.** *Below:* **Pictured in April 1942, virtually nothing now remains of the 'Diamond DC-3' which crash-landed on the beach at Carnot Bay, sixty miles north of Broome.**

DEATH OF THE PRINZ EUGEN

BY HAROLD FOWLER

On August 22, 1938, in the company of Adolf Hitler, Frau Magda von Horthy, wife of the Hungarian Regent, launched the *Prinz Eugen*. She had been built in Gaarden dockyard by the Krupp Germania works at Kiel, the third heavy cruiser of her class. On her first war sortie 'Rheinuebung', she was commanded by Captain Hellmuth Brinkmann, and was sailing in the company of the *Bismarck* when HMS *Hood* was sunk off Greenland on May 24, 1941. From May 29 to February 12, 1942, she was docked in Brest for repair and overhaul to her three engines which had given trouble after the *Bismarck* had been sunk. During this period, 1,200 tons of bombs were dropped by the RAF in an attempt to prevent her putting to sea again and, early on the morning of July 2, 1941, she was hit on the port side by an armour-piercing bomb and forty-seven crewmen were killed in the control room on the lower platform deck.

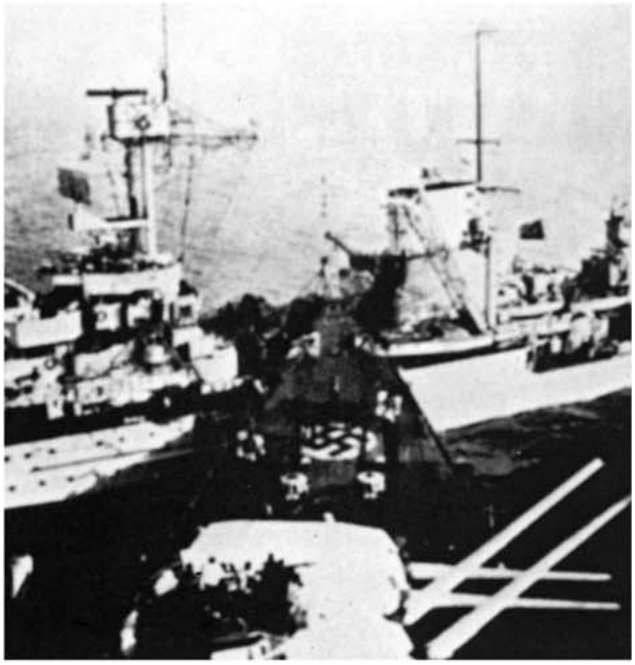
On the night of February 11, 1942, she sailed in a surprise move up the English Channel, reaching the relative safety of the River Elbe in northern Germany the following day. In spite of the many attempts to try to stop her, the only casualty on board the *Prinz* was the leading gunnery mechanic who had been killed by fire from one of the British aircraft sent to attack the German convoy.

Just seven days after the Channel breakthrough, the *Prinz* was ordered to sail to Norway as the flagship of a German force to attack British convoys en route for northern Russia. Three days later, on February 23, the *Prinz Eugen* was torpedoed by HMS *Trident*. The submarine had been waiting submerged off Drontheim fjord and, at 7.04 a.m., a torpedo hit the stern of the *Prinz* causing severe damage and killing fifty men, many of whom were Wehrmacht personnel and Organisation Todt workers being transported in the cruiser. It took several weeks of temporary repair work to prepare the ship for the return to Kiel. About forty feet had to be cut from the stern and a makeshift rudder installed which could be electrically operated or turned manually by the capstan. She put to sea on May 17 and, although attacked by British aircraft along the route, reached Germany safely.

The fitting of a new stern took many months and it was not until the beginning of 1943 that a further attempt was made to get the ship into action. Two attempts to break out of the Baltic, on January 11 and 23, were foiled by British air superiority and, three days after the last abortive effort, Hitler, disillusioned with his navy, issued orders that all the capital ships of the Kriegsmarine were to be decommissioned. Although Grand-

Top: **Frau Magda Horthy launches the Prinz Eugen at Kiel on August 22, 1938.**

February 23, 1942 and the British submarine Trident scores a hit on the stern. *Left:* **Here the Prinz has been patched up at Trondheim, using two rudders from destroyers steered via cables to the stern capstan,** *(right)* **before returning to Germany.**



Damage to the sharp end came on the night of October 15, 1944 in the Gulf of Danzig when the Prinz rammed the 6,000-ton cruiser Leipzig. Although the bow was speedily repaired, the break was still evident in this picture *below* taken early in 1945.

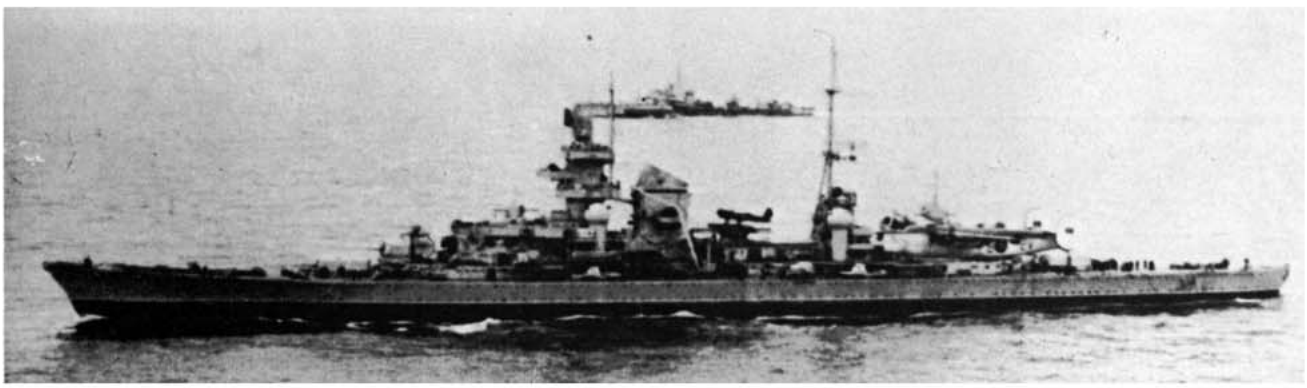
Admiral Doenitz was later able to have the order changed, it did not save the *Prinz* from being relegated to training duties for the next sixteen months.

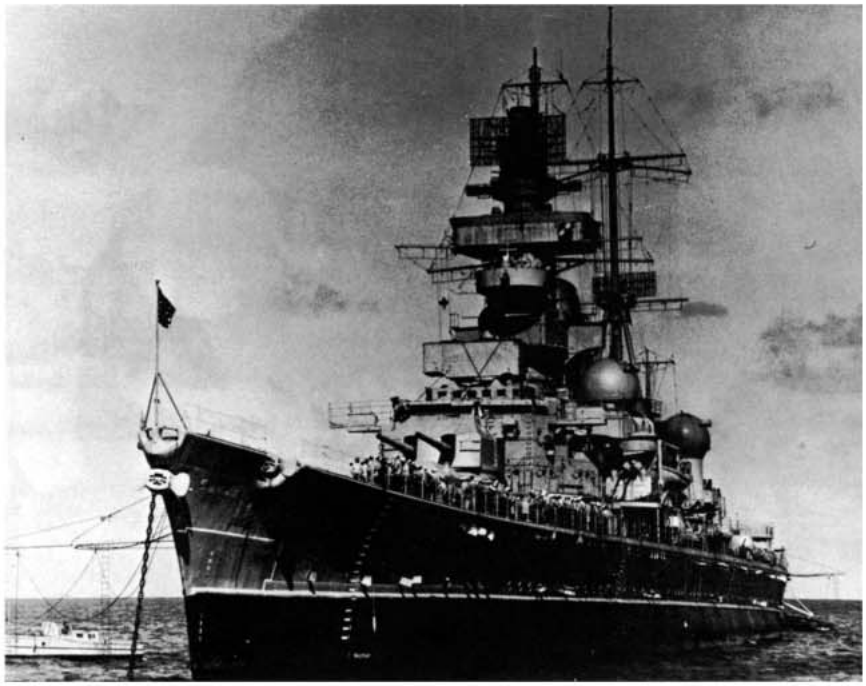
In August 1944, as a result of the deteriorating situation on the Russian front, she was detailed to act as a floating artillery battery on the left flank of the German land forces. Based in the Gulf of Riga, she was to shell Soviet positions using her Arado Ar 196 aircraft for spotting. The first support operation was so successful that the German General Staff formed a 'Battle Group Thiele' comprising ships under Vice-Admiral Thiele, the commander of the Kriegsmarine training flotilla — a move which has been described as, 'one of the most fruitless operations of the whole war, typical of the madness of seeking at any price to hold positions in the rear of the enemy, the possession of which had not the slightest value and neither halted the enemy's advance nor tied down enemy forces'.

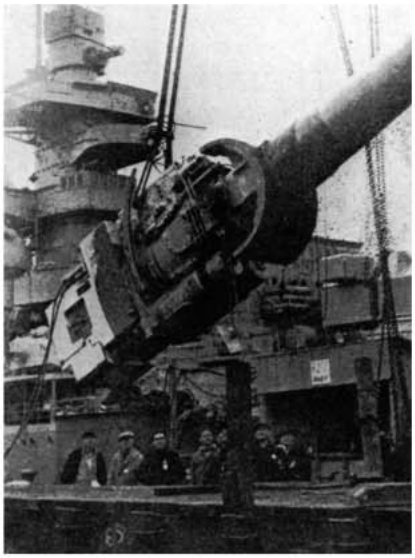
Although well within range of Russian forces, the ships managed to withstand many attacks by bombs and shells until the night of October 15 when the *Prinz* embarrassingly rammed another of the German vessels, the light cruiser *Leipzig*. The *Leipzig* had been blacked out and stationary at the time and, in the reduced visibility, the *Prinz Eugen* had smashed into her port side. It took nearly a day to free the ships and the *Prinz* limped in to Gotenhaven near Danzig in East Prussia.

Incredibly, the damage was repaired in just two weeks and she put to sea again on November 13. Although by then there was little the ship could do to stem the inexorable Soviet advance, she helped for weeks in the evacuation of retreating troops and refugees

Four months later, the Prinz Eugen was surrendered and sailed under escort to Wilhelmshaven. Note the B-24 from RAF Coastal Command in the foreground.







Under new management, the IX-300 at sea during 'Operation Crossroads' — the Bikini atomic bomb tests. Note the missing forward lower guns which were removed *(above)* at Philadelphia.

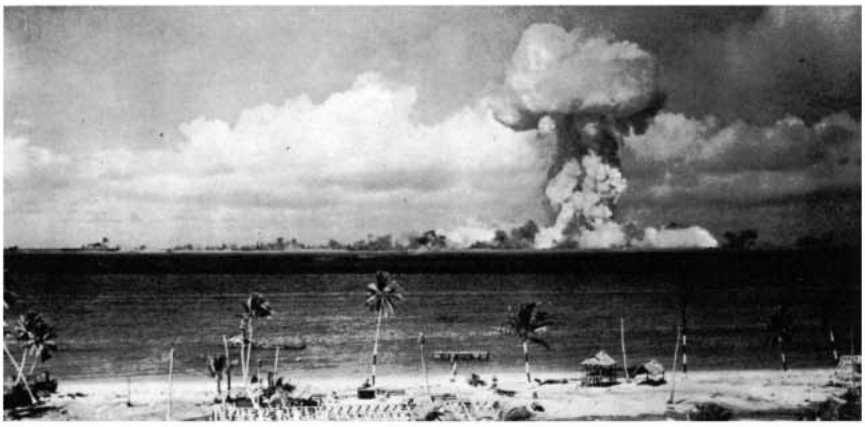
from the Koenigsberg area in Germany's mini-Dunkirk, withstanding countless attacks by Russian aircraft and guns.

By April 10, 1945, the war had passed by and the *Prinz* sailed for Copenhagen which she reached on April 20 and it was there that she was surrendered to the Allies the following month. On May 26, the *Prinz Eugen,* together with the only other large seaworthy German warship, the *Nuernberg,* was escorted by British vessels to Wilhelmshaven.

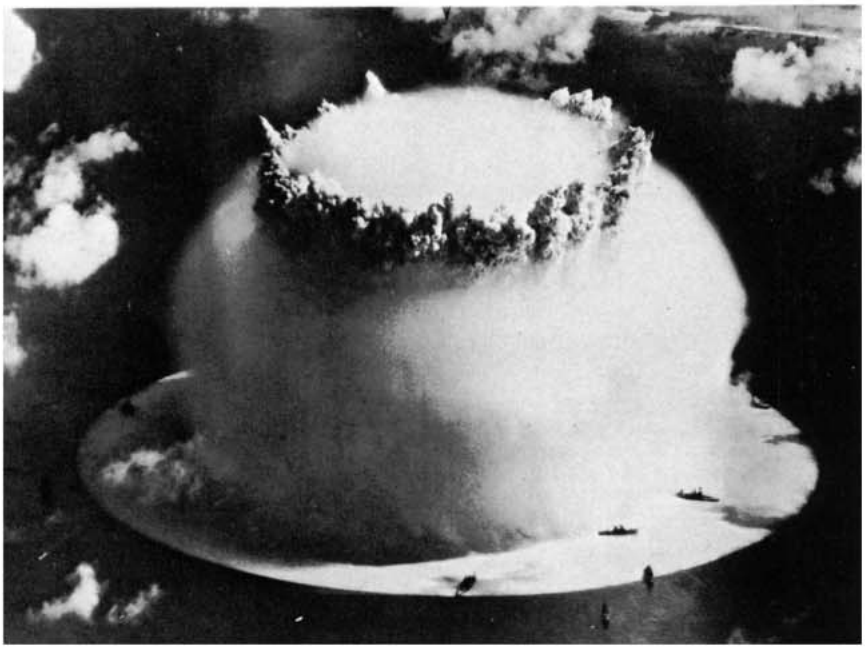
When the tripartite Naval Control Commission met to decide the fate of the ship, the British, American and Russian officers could not agree which country should have the *Prinz Eugen.* The American delegate, Captain A. H. Graubart, later explained what happened: 'The British officer maintained that they had the greater claim because the cruiser had been present at the sinking of the *Hood* and took part in the Channel breakthrough. The Russian said that the loss of life his country had suffered through this ship was much greater. I asked both of them if the ship would have fallen into their hands at all without the material help of the USA. Of course the *Prinz Eugen* should go to America! We therefore divided the ships into three lots. One, a group of destroyers, then the *Nuernberg* and one or two destroyers, and third the *Prinz Eugen.* I wrote the name of each lot on a piece of paper, folded the papers and put them in my cap. My British and Russian colleagues then each drew out a folded paper and that is how I became Commanding Officer of this ship.'

Once in American hands, the USS *Prinz Eugen* was later chosen to be one of the ships to be used for the atomic test at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The United States wanted to know more about the nuclear effects of atomic weapons and Bikini Atoll was picked as the test site and the Marshallese that lived there moved bag and baggage to Rongerik Atoll, some fifty miles east of Bikini. 'Operation Crossroads' came to being and Kwajalein Island of the Kwajalein Atoll was used as headquarters.

On January 13, 1946, the *Prinz Eugen* left port, bound for Philadelphia Naval Shipyard with a stop at Boston, Massachusetts. Some 500 of the *Prinz Eugen's* original crew sailed with her as well as a small detachment of American officers and enlisted men. While in the shipyards at Philadelphia, the *Prinz* underwent some physical changes. The two 8-inch guns were removed from 'B' turret which was the forward lower turret. A trailer van



Above: **The first Bikini atomic test on July 1, 1946 when the bomb was exploded above the Nevada. The Prinz lies to the right of the explosion.** *Below:* **In Test B on July 25, the bomb was detonated underwater. The Prinz Eugen, which survived both blasts, was anchored to the north (behind the fireball) and cannot be seen. Note the shore line in top right (Keystone).**



December 22, 1946 — the Prinz turns turtle 300 yards off Enubuj (also called Carlson Island) at Kwajalein about 200 miles south-east of Bikini.

with radar equipment was placed on the forward side of the bridge and the ship was renamed *IX-300.* From the naval yard, the *IX-300* sailed to Kwajalein via the Panama Canal and finally reached her destination — the Bikini lagoon.

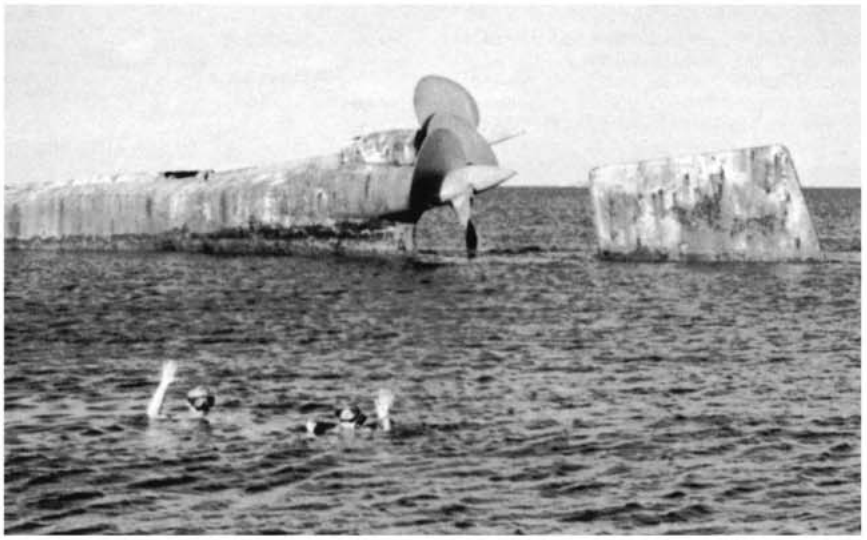
Accompanying the *Prinz Eugen* at Bikini were such famous ships as the Japanese battleship *Nagato* and cruiser *Sakawa;* the American carriers *Saratoga CV-3* and *Independence CVL-22;* the battleships *Nevada BB-36* (painted all red which was to be the principal target ship), *Arkansas BB-33, New York BB-34,* and the *Pennsylvania BB-38* and cruisers *Pensacola CA-24* and *Salt Lake City CA-25.* In addition twelve destroyers, eight submarines and thirty-nine cargo and troop ships were used as targets. After a delay due to weather, on July 1, 1946, a B-29 *Dave's Dream* arrived over the fleet of ships in the lagoon. In Test A, an atomic bomb was exploded in the air above the ships thirty-four seconds past 9.00 a.m. Five ships sank as a result of the blast but the *Prinz Eugen* remained afloat with little damage to her superstructure. After inspections were finished and some repairs made to the damaged ships, Test B was scheduled for July 25.

At 8.35 a.m. the second atom bomb was exploded, this time underwater. In this blast, nine ships sank but the *Prinz Eugen* still remained afloat with no noticeable damage. Due to high radioactivity, it was ten days before inspection teams could board the *Prinz.* The third experiment, Test C, was cancelled and, some weeks later, the *Prinz Eugen,* still hot with radioactivity, was towed to Kwajalein Atoll for further inspection and de-contamination. As the examination of each ship was completed, every vessel was taken outside the atoll, where the ocean was 2,000 feet deep, and the sea valves opened to let the tired veterans sink to a watery grave. Such ships were the *Pennsylvania, Nevada,* the aircraft carrier *Independence,* the cruisers *Salt Lake City* and *Pensacola,* eight destroyers, and twelve troop cargo carriers.

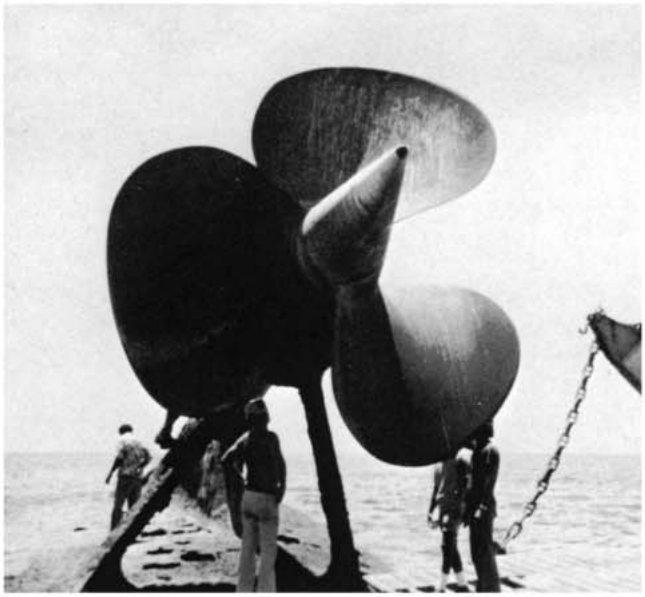
However this was not to be the fate of the *Prinz Eugen.* On the morning of December 21, 1946, the *Prinz* was observed listing with the stern area low in the water. Unfortunately the USS *Conserver ARS-30,* a salvage tug, had left early that same morning to aid a ship in distress. The Kwajalein base commander, Commodore George A. Seitz, USN, dispatched two landing craft and two small tugs with water pumps in an attempt to keep the *Prinz* afloat.

An inspection revealed major flooding below the third deck. As the list increased, water started to pour into the portholes that were damaged and ajar from the bomb test. Water pumps were put into use but they could not keep the flooding below deck in check and, as a last attempt to save the ship, it was decided to beach her. Each ship in the lagoon had a pre-planned and designated area for beaching in the event they started sinking before inspection and de-contamination was completed. Ebeye was the site for the *Prinz* but it was up wind and a strong breeze was blowing so, instead, Enubuj Island was picked since it was down wind. The objective was to use the force of the wind and tugs to ram the *Prinz,* bow first, into the coral reef. The tugs had the ship under control until the last few hundred yards when a gust of wind blew the ship broadside causing the tugs to drop their two lines, in fear of being dragged with the cruiser onto the shore. At 5.00 p.m. the *Prinz Eugen* was aground broadside on the reef and tow lines were re-attached in an attempt to pull her free. This was unsuccessful and the operation was then postponed until the next morning.

In spite of the eforts to save her, at 12.40 p.m. the following day, the *Prinz Eugen* rolled over to starboard and turned bottom up. Contaminated debris floating about were picked up by the salvage crews while radiological monitoring teams kept a constant check on the radiation level of the ship. After a few months, a diving team made an inspection tour inside the ship to ascertain the



Twenty-five years later, the American authorities on Kwajalein (which is a US ballistic missile range command centre) declared the wreck safe from radioactivity and authorised sport diving. These are some of the relics recovered by John Ensign.



reason for sinking. The divers could find no cause and structural damage was minimal. The official report for the loss of the ship states: 'possible damage to sea valves which may have caused flooding below decks.'

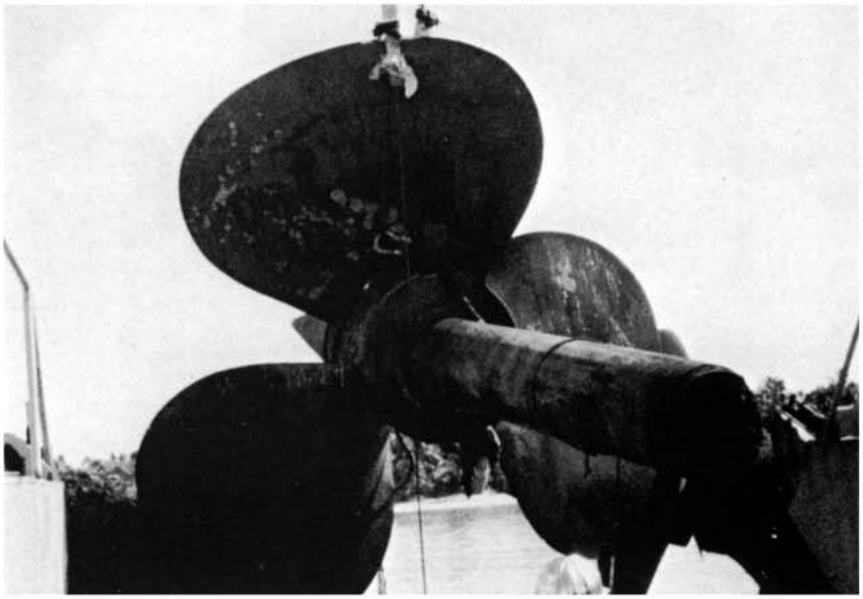
At one time it was suggested by some officials to move the ship into deeper water but the idea was dropped due to the lack of heavy equipment and the projected high cost.

By 1970, a survey concluded that no radiation remained on the ship and sport diving was authorised on September 8. Six months later a diving accident occurred. Two master divers entered the ship on a morning scuba dive. When they failed to return that afternoon, a team was organized to search the ship. John Ensign of the Kwajalein Scuba Club recalls what happened: 'The search was co-ordinated by Major Wienberg, US Army, and two teams were dispatched to enter the ship. The first team was led by Bob Muller and the other team was led by myself. The first body was located at midship but was unable to be recovered due to low air in one of the team member's air tank. The second team made the recovery of the body but cancelled the search for the second body until the morning due to surface conditions after sunset. The next morning my team located and recovered the second body.' It was later determined that both divers had become disorientated inside the inverted ship and ran out of air while trying to locate an exit. The irony of this incident was that the following weekend both men were scheduled to leave Kwajalein for the United States. Since then, a restriction has been imposed by the island commander forbidding divers to make penetration dives inside the *Prinz Eugen.*

In 1973, the first moves were made by former crew members of the *Prinz* to organise the removal of one of the propellers for its return to Germany and the German Navy League lodged an official request with the US Navy's Chief of Operations the following year. Many high level negotiations followed until divers from Harbour Clearance Unit One were instructed to remove the port propeller in 1978. After cutting the drive shaft and supporting stays, the 18-ton propeller was taken ashore by landing craft and then shipped to Long Beach, California. There the Germans had made arrangements with Hapag-Lloyd to transport the propeller to Kiel.

After a 12,000-mile journey, the propeller arrived back in Germany and, after cleaning, it was erected on a specially constructed stand beside the German Naval Memorial at Laboe and unveiled to the public on November 24, 1979.

Above: **Harbour Unit One (which supplied these photographs) was detailed to remove the port propeller. The drive shaft took six hours to cut through and the supports three hours each. The propeller shaft was then slipped from the bearing** *(below)* **and shipped to Germany where it can now be seen beside the German Naval Memorial at Laboe, near Kiel** *(bottom).*



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15TH FEBRUARY 1944
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